The Resurrection of Jimmy Carter, by Robert Shrum

OCTOBER 16, 1978 $1.00
THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

New Times

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Catching Up With Old Friends:

Abbie Hoffman • Peter Reilly
The Ten Dumbest Congressmen
Werner Erhard • Keith Richards
Emily and Bill Harris
Martin Mull • Dr. Nork • Stinky
Charlie Smith (still the oldest American)
Sam Lovejoy • Bill Lee • The B-1 Bomber
Doris Kearns • Larry Flynt
Earl Butz • Marijuana
Richard Nixon • Karen Silkwood
and many, many more....

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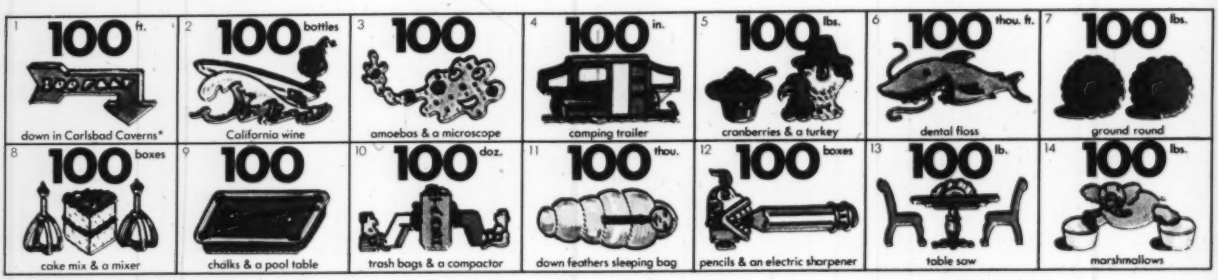
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3 100 amoebas & a microscope
4 100 in. camping trailer
5 100 lbs. cranberries & a turkey
6 100 thou. ft. dental floss
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8 100 boxes cake mix & a mixer
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10 100 doz. trash bags & a compactor
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13 100 lb. table saw
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5. **Winners will be selected in random drawings from entries for sweepstakes by National Judging Institute, Inc., an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. Winners will be asked to execute an affidavit of release and eligibility. All prizes will be awarded. Only one prize to a family. Liability for taxes is the sole responsibility of the individual winners. In lieu of any prize, winner may elect to receive a cash award of $200.**
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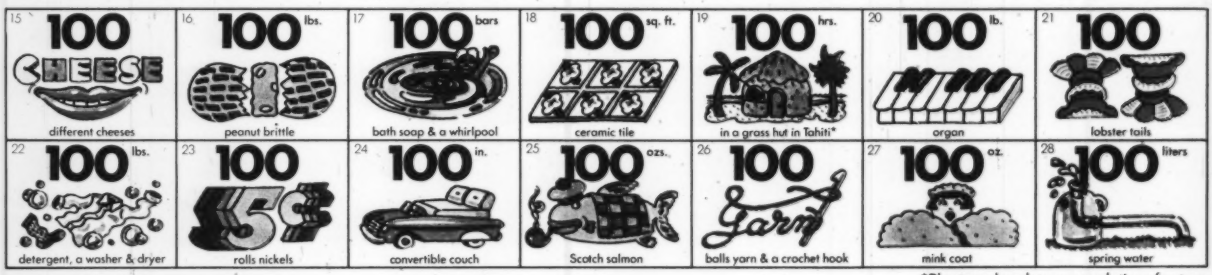
15 100 CHEESE different cheeses
16 100 lbs. peanut brittle
17 100 bars bath soap & a whirlpool
18 100 sq. ft. ceramic tile
19 100 hrs. in a grass hut in Tahiti*
20 100 lb. organ
21 100 lobster tails
22 100 lbs. detergent, a washer & dryer
23 100 rolls nickels
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25 100 ozs. Scotch salmon
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43 100 hrs. at tennis camp*	44 100 in. Ford Mustang	45 100 jigsaw puzzles	46 100 sq. yds. shag carpet	47 100 jars mustard in Dijon*	48 100 sq. ft. mirror panels	49 100 lbs. coffee beans & a grinder
50 100 lbs. ribs & barbecue sauce	51 100 doz. clams & a steamer	52 100 books 15¢ stamps	53 100 lb. mushroom anchor	54 100 yr. old patchwork quilt	55 100 lbs. frozen food & a freezer	56 100 oz. CB radio
57 100 pastries in Vienna*	58 100 frozen crab legs	59 100 Irish coffees in Killarney*	60 100 gals. gas & a moped	61 100 $5 bills for your favorite charity	62 100 mm. lens & a Nikon camera	63 100 pt. diamond earrings
64 100 lb. grandfather clock	65 100 key lime pies in Florida*	66 100 iron-on patches	67 100 spider plants	68 100 reams paper & a copying machine	69 100 toss pillows	70 100 tacos in Mexico City*
71 100 recipes & a food processor	72 100 cartons Benson & Hedges 100's	73 100 pcs. Wedgwood china	74 100 weeks $5 Christmas Club	75 100 sides bacon	76 100 sq. in. remote control color TV	77 100 lb. wedding cake
78 100 plants strawberries & a qt. of cream	79 100 thou. Indian nuts	80 100 frozen meals & a microwave oven	81 100 folding chairs			
82 100 oysters & a pearl	83 100 cassettes & a tape recorder	84 100 cartons Benson & Hedges Lights	85 100 lbs. penny candy			
86 100 boxes crackers & a barrel	87 100 prs. red suspenders	88 100 books S & H stamps	89 100 gals. fuel oil	90 100 $5 chips in Atlantic City*		
91 100 rolls tape & a printing calculator	92 100 ft. depth fish finder	93 100 ins. matched luggage	94 100 yds. weatherstripping	95 100 ft. cord & an electric mower		
96 100 lbs. pots & pans	97 100 cu. yds. of smoke detection	98 100 cu. ft. natural gas	99 100 lbs. macaroons	100 100 thou. pennies		

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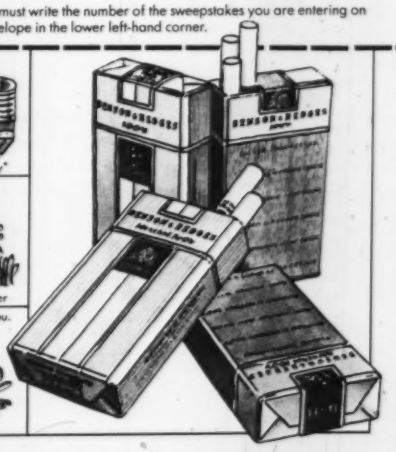


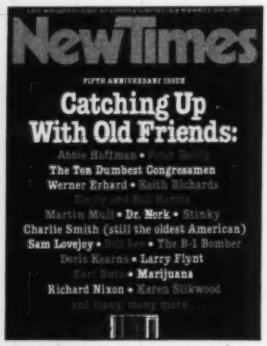
New Times

OCTOBER 16, 1978

CONTENTS

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 8

On the Cover: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Doris Kearns • Larry Flynt
• Marijuana
Richard Nixon • Karen Silkwood
and many, many more

50 Five Year Update: The Stories So Far

Abbie Hoffman is still underground, *Hustler* magazine is still gross, and Senator William Scott still insists he's not dumb. But a fifth anniversary look at recent developments in several *New Times* stories shows that much *has* changed.

24 Jimmy Carter Gets It Together

After 13 nights at Camp David, Jimmy Carter came down from the summit and shot up in the polls. It was the culmination of the swiftest political recovery in the history of the presidency.
by ROBERT SHRUM

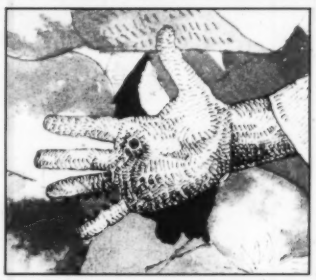
32 The Illiterate Cornerback

Fred Buttler was a college football star and a C-plus student who could not even read his own name. There are many more like him at colleges around the country.
by ROGER RAPOPORT

40 Mickey See, Mickey Do

Corporate law has taken on new meaning in Orlando, Florida, where the 43 square miles of Disney World comprise a district run by the laws of the Disney corporation—and exempt from state environmental and zoning laws.
by BECKY O'MALLEY

58 Pieces of Pynchon



"If you set out to find something, you will find *something*," says the author, who set out to find Thomas Pynchon. "And there is a chance that what you find will be of value."
by ROBERT COOKE GOOLRICK

Energy
Alcohol blends may be the fuels of the future.
by HAL BERNTON
Page 4

Addendum & Erratum
Still no answers in Rutherford, New Jersey.
Page 5

Money
Why should it take two weeks for a check to clear?
by ELEANOR LEWIS and FRANCES CERRA
Page 8

Letters
Page 13

The Insider
Gold rediscovered in California.
Page 14

REVIEWS

Television
Ten would-be sit-com writers get a break.
by RICHARD M. LEVINE
Page 71

Movies
Robert Altman's *A Wedding* is a dismal affair.
by RICHARD CORLISS
Page 74

Music
Bob Seger's old time rock and roll.
by PATRICK CARR
Page 79

Records
Who Are You: The same old songs.
by JIM MILLER
Page 80

Books
The facts of Maureen Howard's life.
by GEOFFREY WOLFF
Page 81

Final Tribute
The last ride for Pullman porters.
by JOHN FLEMING
Page 84

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Energy/by Hal Bernton

FILL 'ER UP WITH GASOHOL

The chubby black man on the ancient John Deere tractor looked out of place as he drove up to the front steps of the U.S. Capitol one warm October day in 1977. Birch Bayh of Indiana gave the driver, Albert Turner, and his machine a hero's welcome; the senator uncapped a bottle of vodka and poured it into the tractor's fuel tank. The engine didn't cough or miss a stroke—it just kept on chugging.

That Washington stunt helped demonstrate that alcohol just might be a fuel of the future—the *near* future. Alcohol fuels could reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil and help the nation's farmers find a market for surplus crops. Some of the billions of petro-dollars paid to the Arabs might instead be invested in a decentralized U.S. alcohol fuel industry. Each region could turn its most plentiful resource into fuel: Alcohol could be extracted from Kansas wheat, Indiana corn, Hawaiian sugar, Wisconsin cheese whey, even New York City garbage.

The Department of Energy, despite strong congressional pressure, has been slow to incorporate alcohol fuels into its game plan. But Idaho's Senator Frank Church has introduced a bill which would require that gasohol, or alcohol fuels blended with gasoline, be sold at pumps in the 1980's. The bill lacks White House support, however, and is unlikely to pass this year.

The recent push for alcohol fuel made from plants—ethanol—alarms the major domestic oil companies since it threatens their own more centralized energy system. They have waged an active campaign to persuade the American people that alcohol fuels will hardly put a tiger in their tanks. But grassroots support for these fuels is strong, especially in the farm belt, and the oil companies aren't getting much mileage from their PR efforts

The first federal study of alcohol fuels was made in 1907. Ten years later Alexander Graham Bell called ethanol a "beautifully clean and efficient motor fuel" and urged that it replace petroleum as a renewable automotive fuel of the future.

During the Depression years farmers converted useless surplus crops into moonshine and poured it into their tractors. Hiram Walker, a large distillery based in Peoria, Illinois, marketed an alcohol blended with gasoline called "alcoholine." In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt warned that "our energy resources are not inexhaustible" and commissioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture to do a thorough study of alcohol fuels. The USDA found that they performed adequately as a motor fuel, and that they could replace and thereby help to conserve petroleum fuels. Furthermore, use of alcohol fuels would bolster the agricultural economy.

After Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government ordered the nation's whiskey distilleries to produce industrial strength ethyl alcohol for use as an additive in fighter plane fuels. But after the war the federal government abandoned its support of alcohol in favor of the oil industry, and the whiskey distilleries went back to making booze.

There are technical problems with alcohol fuels. Alcohol corrodes the plastic in fuel lines and carburetor float valves. To run on pure alcohol, engines would need these parts made of metal. But Volkswagen engineers who have tested alcohol fuels believe they have overcome all technical problems and are now manufacturing a fleet of alcohol-fueled vehicles for the Brazilian government. Even tests conducted by Exxon scientists show that alcohol is a cleaner burning fuel than gasoline, emitting less polluting exhaust fumes.

Ethanol's biggest problem has always been its cost. A study released by the Department of Agriculture in July concluded that, at current grain prices, pure ethanol cannot be produced profitably for less than $1.42 per gallon. But after carefully studying the economics of small-scale production, a farmer named Albert Turner was willing to gamble that he could make it at 65 cents per gallon.

Albert Turner is the director of the farmers cooperative in Selma, Alabama, which sponsored the tractor's trek to Capitol Hill last October. Aided by an $86,000 grant from the U.S. Office of Minority Affairs, his co-op began setting up a small still in the summer of 1977 to prove that any farm group can profitably convert its crops into auto fuel.

The co-op's distillery was made from a bizarre collection of rusted trash bins, brick ovens, gas storage tanks and crudely welded pipe segments. Its daily operations are overseen by one Albert Hubbard, a former moonshiner who used to run the biggest illegal bootlegging ring in the state of Alabama.

Skeptical Treasury Department officials charged with monitoring the co-op project didn't think Turner and Hubbard would ever refine the still enough to produce the high-proof alcohol necessary for auto fuels. But on their second try, the entrepreneurs brewed up ethanol which, measured on a hydrometer, passed the 180-proof mark, nearly the equivalent of a high octane motor fuel.

Soon Turner and Hubbard welcomed their first customer. Clad in a plaid jacket and straw hat, he drove his green Chevy Impala slowly up to the still, stuck his head out the window, and examined the contraption. Turner's face broke into a wide smile when he recognized the man, a prominent local minister.

"Hey, Reverend, you caught me in the act," he cracked. The preacher cautiously got out of his car and listened to Turner's sales pitch: "This alcohol here is for cars, not drinking, and it'll be the best fuel you've ever tried." The minister was persuaded to try some mixed in with his gasoline.

"Crank her up now and see what she'll do," Turner urged the minister as he got back into his car and revved up the engine. "Next time around I'll be selling it for 65 cents a gallon."

As the minister drove away, Turner walked over to Hubbard and grinned. "Once the preacher gets hooked on this stuff the whole congregation will go for it. The mass of people still think it's a joke."

The oil companies, though, aren't laughing about alcohol fuel projects like Turner's. This past winter Mobil Oil scientists lobbied with congressmen about the potential economic and technological problems they foresaw in using ethanol as an auto fuel. When ethanol's long-time champion in the Senate, Carl Curtis of Nebraska, released an optimistic study of alcohol fuels prepared by the Republican Conference, he soon heard from Mobil's public affairs manager Edward Hennelly. "We feel the consumer would not benefit by legislation that requires alcohol to be used as a motor fuel," Hennelly wrote. "We think a better way to expand gasoline supplies in the

ADDENDUM & ERRATUM

Ronnie, We Hardly Knew Ye. In his story "Gay Baiting in the Classroom" (*NT*, 9/4/78), Robert Shrum reported that the California Young Republicans had passed a resolution opposing Proposition 6, the controversial measure on the state's November ballot that would bar gays from teaching in the public schools. Now another organization, also called California Young Republicans (but not officially recognized by the California secretary of state), has written asking us to note that it *supports* Proposition 6. Done.

Ronald Reagan, incidentally, finally took a stand on Proposition 6 in late September: he opposes it. Moving ever so gingerly from right to center (see Shrum's column "Reagan's Next Hurrah," *NT*, 10/2/78), Reagan released a statement saying that Proposition 6 "has the potential of infringing on basic rights of privacy and perhaps even constitutional rights." But he was careful to note: "I don't approve of teaching a so-called gay lifestyle in our schools, but there is already adequate legal machinery to deal with such problems if and when they arise."

Cancer Town: Still No Explanation. In our August 7 issue, Rick Levine told of the baffling cancer clusters in Rutherford, New Jersey. There were six cases of leukemia, he wrote, "where statistics indicated even one would have been too many." (The cases all involved children living near one elementary school.) There were also nine cases of Hodgkin's disease in the town's northwest section.

When we published Levine's story, state investigators had just begun extensive testing to determine what might have caused the clusters. Their report was released in mid-September but it provides no answers for Rutherford's nervous residents. Investigators found nine carcinogens in the town's air, but not in sufficient quantities to have caused the clusters. The study reports that "initial indications are that levels of contamination found in Rutherford are not substantially different from what would be expected in similar industrialized areas."

But investigators did not conduct thorough tests to see what effect local industries might have on the Rutherford envrionment. There are 42 chemical plants within three miles of the town. ●

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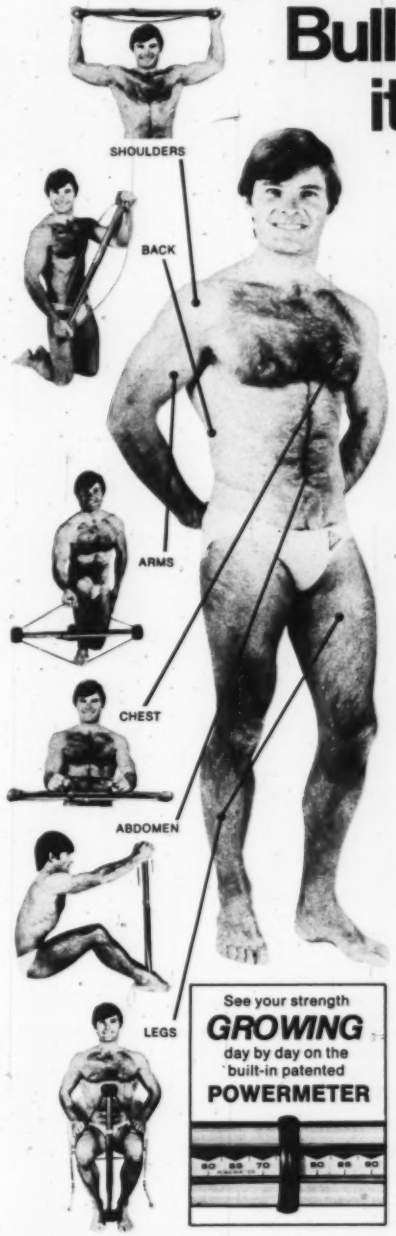

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A Capitol Idea: Albert Turner and Birch Bayh tanking up with vodka

future would be to make alcohol from coal and then turn it into gasoline using Mobil's conversion process."

Mobil unveiled its patented process last January at its Paulsboro, New Jersey, laboratories. There, in a metal warehouse, a four-story-high machine, with a metal reactor four inches in diameter and 25 feet tall at its center, rose from the floor. It was complete with interconnecting catwalks and a computer monitoring office. The $10 million machine could convert four barrels of alcohol into one barrel of high octane gasoline; it reached peak production at 1.5 barrels of gasoline in a 24-hour period. Subsidized in part by a $1.5 million Department of Energy grant, the test project has since been shut down, having proved its point.

Mobil's process can only use methanol—alcohol derived primarily from coal—as its feed stock. Mobil owns four to five billion tons of U.S. coal, but gasoline made from its coal deposits would currently cost from 40 to 50 cents more than a gallon of gasoline. It would take 30 years to develop a large-scale plant to produce gasoline from coal. By that time, Mobil believes, the price of oil may be high enough to make its process economically feasible.

Chevron Oil officials have also met with Senate aides about alcohol fuel legislation and warned them of the problems with alcohol fuels. Chevron lobbyist Robert Lindquist charged that the fuels "have been proposed throughout the history of the motor car, but every time they've been rejected on economic and technical grounds." Last spring, at Chevron's refinery in Richmond, California, a company newsletter urged employees to write their state assemblymen about pending alcohol fuels legislation. "If Rolaids will relieve acid indigestion, what will relieve gasohol?" headlined Chevron's appeal.

While Mobil and Chevron wage war on alcohol fuels, some smaller oil companies are quietly looking into marketing alcohol blends. Union Oil has contacted California officials to discuss plans to sell gasohol at the pump. The president of Occidental Petroleum, Armand Hammer, threw his support behind alcohol fuels in a private meeting with a Senate staffer in June. Gulf Oil is moving ahead with plans to build a 25-million-gallon-a-year distillery in Jayhawk, Kansas, designed to transform garbage into ethanol. But Gulf wants to use the ethanol as a feedstock in the petrochemical industry, not as a fuel. As its Washington lobbyist Spence Sheldon emphasizes, "We're not in the gasohol camp."

Neither, it seems, is the Carter administration. When the President presented his ill-fated energy plan to the Congress in April 1977, he virtually ignored the potential of alcohol fuels. A small alcohol fuels division has been shuffled through three different government bureaucracies in the past four years, and its officials have rarely had an opportunity to meet with top energy policy makers. Early this year, bowing to congressional pressure, the Energy Department set out to rectify the situation in classic federal style: it established a special task force to study what role alcohol fuels might play in the nation's energy future.

On Capitol Hill, midwestern congressmen have been carrying the alcohol fuels banner. In the fall of 1977, Curtis of Nebraska and Robert Dole of Kansas got the Senate Agriculture Committee to tag onto the 1977 Farm Bill an amendment that will require the Department of Agriculture to provide federal loan guarantees for construction of four $15 million alcohol distilleries. The USDA is now reviewing more than 60 bids for the plant contracts.

Yet support for alcohol fuels is not strong at the Department of Agriculture. Tom Sands, a spokesman for Secretary Bob Bergland, has said that he would rather see the Department of Energy handle the entire plant-selection process. Bergland, in his public and private statements, has shied away from the idea of using surplus agricultural products to produce ethanol.

Farmers, though, see ethanol as a way out of the rut of deflated crop prices. They maintain that widespread use of alcohol fuels would create an unlimited demand for surplus farm products, which in turn would drive up grain prices independent of government policy makers. "Show the farmer a good market and he will produce beyond expectations," pleads Janice Mattson, an activist farm-wife who is pushing for ethanol.

Already the gasoholic bandwagon is picking up momentum. Early in 1977, 16 states banded together to form the National Gasohol Commission, which is serving as a clearinghouse for information on the progress of the states' alcohol fuel programs. At some 40 service stations in seven states—Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, Montana and Wyoming—cars are lining up at the pumps for gasohol that's selling for as low as 69.9 cents a gallon. In California, the state legislature authorized a program of alcohol-fueled state motor vehicles this past August.

Just last month, the Environmental Protection Agency, charged with carefully scrutinizing all new gasoline additives under the Clean Air Act amendment of 1977, gave gasohol a tentative stamp of approval. While final EPA endorsement depends on the results of more conclusive studies, EPA chief Douglas Costle said that preliminary testing shows that use of gasohol may actually improve air quality in some urban areas.

And down in Selma, co-op director Albert Turner and brewmaster Albert Hubbard are tinkering with their makeshift still. "Right now, it's like Grandma baking a cake," Hubbard says. "You may not be going by the recipe, but when it works out, you're doing o.k."●

Photograph by John Troha/Black Star

The spirit of the Czar lives on.

It was the Golden Age of Russia. Yet in this time when legends lived, the Czar stood like a giant among men.

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Money/by Eleanor Lewis and Frances Cerra

THE "FLOAT": HOW BANKS HOLD YOU UP

It is no accident that banks prefer to advertise the friendliness of their tellers or the number of their branches rather than dollar-and-cents facts about their services. True competition, after all, can eat into profits. If the consumer doesn't know, for example, that the "highest interest rate allowed by law" at a commercial bank is one-quarter percent lower than at a savings bank, it is the consumer's fault—and loss—and not the bank's.

Given this attitude about even basic facts like interest rates, it comes as no surprise that banks keep their policies on check-cashing very quiet. Until, that is, an unsuspecting customer takes a check to a teller's window expecting to get some cash. Not long ago, 79-year-old Jacob Rapp brought several checks to a branch of the Dime Savings Bank, one of the largest thrift institutions in New York City, where he maintained savings and checking accounts. The checks were made out to him but had been drawn on another New York City bank. His request was simple: He wanted to deposit the checks and draw against them that day. Impossible, he was told, until six business days had passed. That amount of time was necessary, the bank insisted, to allow the checks to be cleared through the other bank.

Rapp became so indignant that he filed a class-action suit on behalf of all the Dime's checking customers on the issue of the required wait. But his experience is repeated every day at banks throughout the country, with the waiting time for getting cash ranging between 3 and 20 days, depending on the origin of the check. A random survey of 325 banks recently completed by the Federal Reserve System, but still unpublished, found that 14.6 percent of the banks held personal checks originating out of state for 13 days or longer; 5.6 percent even held out-of-state cashier's checks that long.

Bank officials maintain that these waiting times are necessary for prudent bank management. The banks, after all, must protect themselves from bad checks. If a bank cashed a check immediately, and then the check bounced, the bank might never be able to recoup the loss. And that loss would eventually harm all customers. Moreover, bank officials point out that the right to withhold cash until a check has cleared has been upheld by the courts.

But are the long waits required by banks really justified? Or, as critics suggest, are they deliberately made longer than necessary so that the banks are able to invest the "float"—the term used to describe all that cash which they and not the customer hold—while all that clearing and collecting take place? Federal Reserve officials estimate that the float generated by forcing customers to wait for

their cash amounts to many billions of dollars. On a typical recent day, for commercial banks alone, the total of checks in the process of collection reached more than $50 billion. Interest rates for the "float" in the so-called federal funds market have been near 7.5 percent recently.

Interviews with Federal Reserve officials and some bankers indicate that the waiting times required by many banks and thrift institutions are unnecessarily long. Furthermore, they indicated that if the banks used computerized systems to handle bad checks the waiting time could be shortened at all banks. Indeed, the American Bankers Association is in the process of evaluating an automated system for handling bad checks that will "dramatically" shorten this time period, according to Robert A. Robinson, assistant director of the operations and automation division of the association.

This effort by the ABA may have been prompted by the fact that the Federal Reserve considers check-cashing policies a problem, and is now studying the question of "delayed availability" for possible regulatory action, according to Dave Myers, staff attorney for its consumer affairs division. Myers says a wait of between 10 and 14 days for cash is not uncommon. "Banks have a legitimate interest in protecting themselves but to what extent they can go to protect themselves, and who is to set the limits, are all questions to be considered," he said.

How long does it actually take a check to clear? That depends on the location of the original bank. Checks circulated within the Boston-to-Washington, D.C. megalopolis can clear in 24 hours. Checks drawn and deposited within the same Federal Reserve region can take as long as three days to make the trip from the bank where they are deposited, to a check collection operation run by the Fed and back to the original bank. In the worst possible case, where the original bank is located in a rural area, in a different Federal Reserve region, clearance can take as long as six days.

But that is not the end of the process. If the check is no good, it must be sent out to the bank on which it was drawn by midnight of the day following the day on which it was deposited. But no laws or regulations presently specify how quickly the returned check must be transported or processed. While the system of clearing good checks is highly mechanized and computerized the process of notification on bad checks is not.

Most banks process bad checks by hand and use ordinary U.S. mail for notification rather than messenger services or express mail. This means that in the East Coast megalopolis, it will take three or four days for a bank to learn about a bad check. In that worst possible case of a rural bank, the entire clearance and notification process might take as much as ten days.

Illustration by John Rowe

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Most checks, of course are good. Only two-thirds of one percent bounce, according to a 1975 report. But banks generally protect themselves against losses on less than one percent of the checks by refusing to pay immediately on all of them. At the same time, their waiting period may be one or two or, in some cases, four days longer than the actual time it takes for notification to reach them.

The importance of even one day of extra float can be seen in the way the nation's leading brokerage house, Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith pays customers for stock transactions. Customers on the East Coast get checks drawn on California's Bank of America. California customers get checks drawn on an East Coast bank. In the *New York Times*, a spokesperson for Merrill Lynch admitted that this practice involved "considerable" sums, but declined to say how much. He added that Merrill Lynch, had considered using a rural bank in California to extend the float even more, but decided its customers might object.

One customer however, Michael Gilman of New York, objected so much to getting checks drawn on the Bank of America that he filed a class-action suit seeking not only an injunction against this practice but also recovery of Merrill Lynch's profits from investing the float as well. The case is now pending. Rapp's suit against the Dime charges the bank, among other things, with false advertising and fraudulently concealing its check-clearing policy. The bank's attorney would not comment on the case. Recently, the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court summarily ruled against Rapp without hearing any evidence. Rapp's attorney is preparing an appeal. But even if that appeal is successful, any decision that might force the Dime and other banks to change their policies is probably a long time off. Any Federal Reserve rule-making effort will take many months, perhaps years, to be implemented. In any case, it could not directly affect thrift institutions not regulated by the Fed.

Consumers upset about waiting for their cash, therefore, can do one of two things: Patronize a bank with a shorter requirement, or, make themselves known to the bank management. Forty New York and Washington D.C. area banks told staff members of the Senate Banking Committee in 1976 that they waived their waiting policies for "known customers." How does a customer become known? Short of having a bank balance in six figures, a few friendly chats with the branch manager might work. The other choice is to take a deep breath and start shouting. ●

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LETTERS

Death Wish?

Rick Levine's article "Cancertown" (August 7) was extremely well done and moved me as few articles have in 1978. Perhaps this is because cancer continues to baffle some of the best medical sleuths in the world by its insidious and unknown nature.

As Americans move into the 1980's and we realize our dependence on products manufactured in plants like those surrounding Rutherford, the real source of many carcinogens comes back to us. It is in this burgeoning technological framework that Americans, particularly those along the Eastern seaboard, have chosen to live. I am no exception. But when the sanctity of the family and little league is shaken through the trials of a son or daughter with leukemia, it is time to re-examine this malignant expansiveness that underwrites our lifestyles.

Russell Hastings
No. Kingstown, Rhode Island

And No George Ringo Jokes, Either!

First, congratulations on a generally fine magazine. I have been reading it since it was first published and have always found it interesting. However, the picture and quote of new Pope John Paul on the masthead of the "Insider" section (September 18) deviates significantly from your usual policy of fairness and good journalism.

Quite simply, since this quote was taken out of context, from God knows where, from a speech on God knows what, it can only end up being misleading. As it now stands, this quote makes John Paul into something like a theocratic fascist. (I hope this was not your intent). I don't think, from what I read, that he is; but even if he is, how are we to know this when we are given, not facts, but hints and slurs and innuendos?

Terrence Donnelly
St. Louis, Missouri

Insane Asylum

James Gleick's article on the insanity defense was first-rate. It's nice to see a reporter who is willing to forego the "good story" that always lies behind proving some criminal may have been wrongly accused, and to recognize that the overwhelming problem of criminal justice has become a matter of getting juries to convict people of even the most serious crimes.

In fact, I think the argument about insanity defenses has gone even farther than Gleick suggests. During the trial of officer Torsney, his attorney actually argued, apparently successfully, that it was the very appalling nature of the crime—shooting an innocent child without provocation—that proved his client couldn't possibly be sane, simply because no sane person would do such a thing. The defense actually *emphasized* the random and brutal nature of the incident as a way of proving their client couldn't possible have been sane. What we've accomplished is to reach an absurdity where crimes are logically impossible simply because no sane person would commit them. It's the same reasoning that has led the Russians to decide that dissent is insanity because no sane person would complain in utopia.

Bill Tucker
New York, New York

The Trials of James Earl Ray

I just finished reading the September 4 edition of New Times, and I think Jerry Policoff and William Scott Malone wrote a true story about the Assassination Committee that's investigating the deaths of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

I am the brother of James Earl Ray, so I know how low the committee has sunk in order to try and clear the FBI of any involvement in the assassination of M.L.K. Your readers probably know that Richard Sprague was Chief Council before G. Robert Blakey. I believe Mr. Sprague would have found out who murdered M.L.K., but he was forced to resign when he put pressure on the Government to get the secret FBI files on the King assassination.

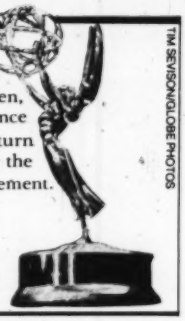
The first thing G. Robert Blakey did when he took over was to fire everybody that Mr. Sprague had hired and replace them with some yes men.

Then he made some new rules: everybody he hired would first have to be approved by both the FBI and CIA.

If the American public wants the truth, then the only way they will ever get it is if James Earl Ray is allowed a jury trial. That way he can put on his own case and his attorney Mark Lane can cross-examine all of the witnesses that the FBI put on the stand against him.

Jerry Ray
Marietta, Georgia

"Ladies and gentlemen, I urge you to return to your seats immediately. It is of the utmost importance to this nation that the entertainment industry be perceived as having been in their seats during the past half hour."—Alexander Cohen, producer of the Emmy Awards, to the live audience in Hollywood, just prior to the telecast's return to the air following an interruption for the Mideast peace announcement.



TIM SEVSON/GLOBE PHOTOS

The Insider

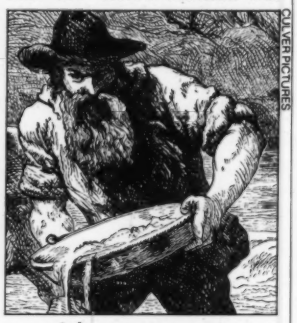
What a rush

Thar's Gold in Them Thar Hills

A Canadian mining company has struck gold in California just 20 miles from the original 1848 gold rush site at Sutter's Mill. Troy Gold Industries Ltd, began drilling two and a half years ago on the 40-acre location which is in the famed "Mother Lode" belt of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Troy President Al Farrell says he purchased the property for $600,000 from a mining engineer who had held the land since 1937. He expects the five veins—"Blazing Star," "Ferrins Vein," "Last Chance," "Matrimony," and "Never Sweat"—to produce over an ounce of gold per ton of ore, a higher percentage than that found in South Africa which harbors 70 percent of the "free" world's gold resources. Farrell thinks he can dig up 45,000 tons of raw ore a year, or 45,000 ounces of gold.

The 52-year-old Farrell has been in the mining business since he was 18, and he made his first million by selling off a mine when he was 41. After that, he retired to an island off British Columbia. Then he got restless and began looking around for another place to dig. He was spurred on by a 1975 U.S. Bureau of Mines report which indicated that the Sierra Nevada was



OLIVER PICTURES

one of the greatest resources of gold in the country.

"We almost gave up after three holes, but we hit on the fourth cut," Farrell said. "We were pretty sure it was there, but you never know."

—Doug Garr

Out of town

N.J. Mayor Abandons Post, Starts Boutique

Last May, the Mayor of New Brunswick, New Jersey, sold off his house and everything in it, including his toupee, and drove west.

Area residents were shocked to learn that the Honorable Richard J. Mulligan had, with his wife, opened a boutique in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, while supposedly serving as their mayor. He continued to draw a $12,000-a-year salary though he returned rarely to New Brunswick, once to be found guilty of assault resulting from a fracus over an earlier automobile accident.

Finally, in September, Mulligan resigned via a "to whom it may concern" letter addressed to City Hall. Two of Mulligan's critics, Ed McGlynn and Gregory "Zip" Mackaronis, scheduled a public toast and hoisted champaign bottles in downtown New Brunswick. Two police cars and six patrolmen arrived on the scene to haul in the toasters for drinking in public. But a quick taste at headquarters proved the champagne was actually ginger ale.

—Michael Hoyt

Before your very eyes

Maine Senate Candidate Claims Sexual Abuse

A single glance at U.S. Senate candidate Hayes E. Gahagan's campaign brochure upset Sara LeClair, a printer from Maine. She thought she spotted the word "sex" etched in the shadow of Gahagan's right eyebrow and below the knuckles of his left hand. Upon closer inspection, a woman's reproduction organ appeared to be inscribed in the candidate's hair.

Ms. LeClair dashed off an angry letter to Gahagan, accusing him of utilizing subliminal sex symbols to enhance the appeal of his campaign material. The technique is widely employed by national advertisers and is said to have been used in other political campaigns.

Gahagan, whose independent campaign is based on support from Maine's right-wing anti-abortion, anti-ERA voting bloc, was embarrassed to say the least. "The vote I'm after is the Christian patriot," he declared when news of his predicament leaked, "I'm not after the hotsy-totsy swinger vote."

"I don't know who did it. I don't know if they were trying to help me or hurt me," Gahagan explained, "but I do know that I will call for a congressional investigation if I am elected." In a "private and confidential" letter to the U.S. Senate Ethics Committee, Gahagan further outlined his allegations that "unknown" parties had doctored his campaign material.

The candidate's two opponents, incumbent Democrat Sen. William D. Hathaway and GOP challenger Rep. William S. Cohen, expressed surprise and astonishment. "I hope he's not saying we had anything to do with this," an aide to Cohen stated, "because if he is, he'd better have some proof."

Gahagan has refused to point the finger at any of the parties involved in processing the material. His campaign manager owns the shop which printed the brochures and posters. And the photographer, Tom Jones of Brunswick, has taken pictures for several other candidates, including Cohen.

"Hayes Gahagan, he's that guy up in Maine who gives you a warm feeling when you look at his campaign material," chuckled Lynn Murphy, a staffer on the Senate Ethics Committee. "We are aware of the allegation . . . but we would not have any jurisdiction unless he were elected and called for an investigation."

And, there's very little chance of that. Gahagan has hardly caused a ripple in public opinion polls taken on the Hathaway–Cohen race.

—John Day

TOM JONES

Gahagan: Doctored photo

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Rizzo rises again

Philly Cop Calls for Prosecution in Brutality Case

Things haven't been easy for Alphonso Deal since he saw news photographs of police officers beating Delbert Africa. Two months ago, Philadelphia police took over a house occupied by Africa and several other members of MOVE—an extended family of black extremists. Deal, a 24-year veteran of the police force, called for the prosecution of those officers involved in the beating.

Deal is also head of the North Philly NAACP and his remarks have caused a political explosion. Mayor Frank Rizzo has played up the Deal statement as an example of social extremism threatening order in the city. And the Fraternal Order of Police, the police union, is hearing a motion to expell Deal from its ranks.

Rizzo is campaigning for a change in the city charter that would permit him to seek a third term as mayor, and the Deal case has become a rallying point for those who oppose him. "The mayor has inadvertently caused blacks to rally together," says Harold James, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Black Policemen's Association. "Everyone's talking about registering to vote." Last month the national director of the NAACP, Benjamin Hooks, linked the two issues at a gathering of 1,500 people in North Philadelphia.

Deal says Delbert Africa's "human misery" moved him to blow the whistle on the brutality. "I didn't pick this up to play with the charter," he says, "Rizzo has been trying to divide people along racial lines because he has no program for the community."

The Fraternal Order of Police will vote on Deal's membership this week. Meanwhile, Deal knows he's in a "volatile" position. The mayor "wants a piece of me," he says. And fellow officers, Deal claims, have jeopardized his life by jamming his police radio signal and by responding slowly to his calls for assistance on duty. •

Police raid MOVE house

Joan meets the press

Kennedy Annoyed by Writer Friend's Announcement of His Affairs

Joan Kennedy opened up to writer Joan Braden in the August issue of *McCalls* magazine and conceded that she had recently recovered from a drinking problem. Braden, who is, or at least was, a close friend of the Kennedy family, had promised to show Ted Kennedy a draft of the article before it went to press. By the time he got his copy, however, it was too late and the senator exploded over one particularly sensitive point—the rumors of his affairs.

"People ask whether the newspaper stories about Ted and girls hurt my feelings," Braden quoted Mrs. Kennedy as saying. "Of course they hurt my feelings. They went to the core of my self-esteem. When one grows up, feeling that one is sort of special and hoping that one's husband thinks so, and then suddenly thinking maybe he doesn't . . . maybe I'm just not attractive enough or attractive any more, or whatever, and it was awfully easy to then say . . . I might as well have another drink."

The senator next ran into Joan Braden at a Washington party given by former U.S. Senator John Sherman Cooper. In the presence of a Senate colleague, Kennedy reportedly said to Braden, "You stabbed me in the back, we're through as friends." Braden, we hear, then dashed off a letter to Kennedy demanding an apology. The senator responded by asking Braden to his office where he apologized for the circumstances but not the content of what he had said.

McCall's
For the first time
JOAN KENNEDY TALKS
about her drinking problem,
her troubled marriage,
her independent new life
ELVIS PRESLEY
An untold love story
When dieting can be bad for you
How can you be sure your love will last?

A spokesman in Kennedy's office confirmed that there had been a misunderstanding between the senator and Braden. "She said she would let him see the quotes," the Kennedy aide explained, "but there was a miscommunication and he didn't get them." Joan Braden's reaction to every question we asked was, "I don't know anything about it." She added, "Teddy and I were friends and we remain friends."•

Peeping Toms

Cohabitation Costs Cops Their Jobs

When two people fall in love, it is usually allowed, by today's standards, that they live together before tying the marriage knot. But in Milwaukee, Gordon Patterson, 25, and Linda Valesco, 24, two city police officers who plan to marry this month, were fired from their jobs for allegedly violating department rules against premarital cohabitation.

The affair began when the two met at the police academy in December 1976, and blossomed when they started dating at the end of the 4 p.m. to midnight shift. Binocular toting internal affairs officers, who staked out Valesco's apartment, testified in a department review, that on 18 of 27 surveillances, Patterson was still visiting at 2:30 a.m. For unknown reasons, the cops never watched the premises of the perpetrators for an entire night, yet they concluded from this limited spying that the two were living together.

Milwaukee Police Association President Jerry Dudzik expects the officers will be reinstated during some stage of appeal. However, Dudzik feels that the enormous waste of taxpayer money and resultant loss of police services caused by the investigations are more serious than 67-year-old Police Chief Harold Breier's one-man morals campaign. Several other officers have been tailed, fired and then reinstated for similar offenses—crimes that go unenforced against the general public.

"The chief spends $1 million a year to have officers watch other officers. Like any big city, we have our share of crime," Dudzik explains. "If he [Chief Breier] would spend as much time investigating organized crime in Milwaukee as he does checking up on whether we're shacking up with someone, the city would be a little safer."

—*Andrew D. Gilman*

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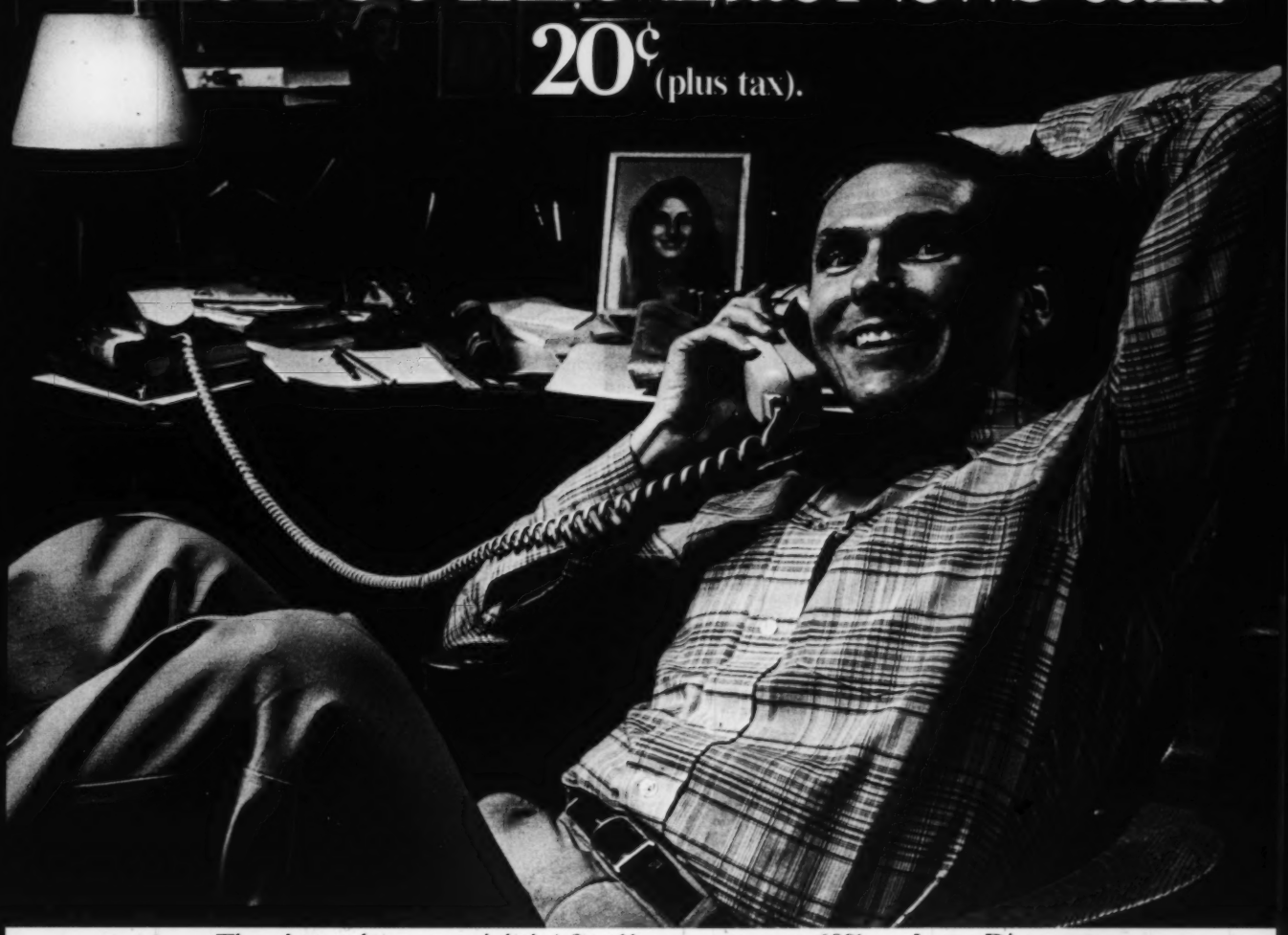

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23-30	.31	.18	.20	.12	.12	.08	1.00	2.00
31-40	.35	.21	.22	.14	.14	.09	1.10	2.10
41-55	.39	.25	.25	.17	.15	.10	1.35	2.35
56-70	.41	.27	.26	.18	.16	.11	1.60	2.60
71-124	.43	.29	.27	.19	.17	.12	1.75	2.75
125-196	.44	.30	.28	.20	.17	.12	1.85	2.85
197-292	.46	.32	.29	.21	.18	.13	1.95	2.95
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Paper chase

Multi-media Merger Made

In one of the biggest media deals of all time, the huge Gannett newspaper chain is about to finalize a $370 million merger with the Combined Communications Corporation, a major broadcasting and outdoor advertising enterprise. Once the deal is consummated, Gannett will

Gannett
A World of Different Newspapers

control 7 TV stations, 13 radio stations and 79 daily newspapers with a total circulation of about 3.4 million.

Rochester-based Gannett already owns 77 dailies, more than any other chain in the country (although Knight-Ridder enjoys a higher overall circulation). What the merger with the Phoenix-based CCC will do, in addition to providing Gannett with CCC's two newspaper plums (the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and the *Oakland Tribune*), is give the newspaper giant an instant foothold in the broadcasting industry.

More significant in the long run, however, is the expanded purchasing power the merger would provide newspaper-hungry Gannett. The chain purchased 20 papers in 1977 alone, and one company executive recently predicted Gannett will increase its holdings to 100 papers in the near future. As a result of the new resources provided by CCC, Gannett's annual revenues are expected to increase from the $557.9 million it reported in 1977 to about $800 million.

The merger, which company officials expect to be completed by early next year, must still receive FCC approval and clearance from the antitrust division of the Justice Department, which has shown little concern over the size of newspaper chains in the past. —*Michael Massing*

The right grows roots

Petition-Wielding Crusader Fights to Eliminate Income Tax

The grassroots revolt against taxes is snowballing into an increasingly militant movement — uncontrollable by established political forces. The latest sign of this is a growing petition campaign calling for the abolition of the federal income tax, a move which makes the GOP's Kemp-Roth tax limitation bill and even Howard Jarvis' Proposition Thirteen seem modest.

The petition drive for the so-called "Liberty Amendment" has garnered some three million signatures since last June, according to amendment crusader Armin Moths. The veteran tax protester from El Cajon, California, is currently on a 45-day, 51-city tour of the country. "I was watching TV with my family when David Brinkley revealed a poll which said 56 percent of the people were ready to cut federal taxes fifty percent," Moths, a portly 54-year-old contractor, recalls. "That's what really got me going. People are tired of being tax slaves."

Long a goal of the extreme right, the Liberty Amendment was a mere pipe dream before Proposition 13 came rumbling out of California. Now, Moths says, he will be able to collect some 23 million signatures by November for the amendment which, he adds, will be used to clobber politicians into legislating an end to the dreaded IRS.

Moths' managers, including some of the sharpest right-wing publicists in the business, hope to make him into a new, younger version of folk hero Howard Jarvis. Like the old curmudgeon, Moths is closely associated with the Mormon faith and has a long record battling the taxmen, including a 1972 arrest for attempting to rescue seized property after an IRS confiscation raid on a delinquent taxpayer.

So far the Liberty Amendment has won the support of a handful of right-wing legislators including Reps. John Rousselot (R.-Ca.) and Larry McDonald (D.-Ga.), the tacit approval of Howard Jarvis and several million disgruntled taxpayers. While Moths and most of his entourage come from the far right, they are aiming their campaign at the angry working class in such cities as Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburg.

"This is really a populist movement," Moths claims. "All sorts of people are signing up—a whole army. We even have a lot of federal employees in this. After all, they work in all that waste."

—*Joel Kotkin*

Moths: Farewell to tax dollars

Familiar infighting

Vance Makes Points, Brzenzinski Sits on Sidelines

When Jimmy Carter singled out Secretary of State Cyrus Vance for high praise during his address to Congress on the Mideast, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski knew, as an authoritative White House source puts it, "that there is absolutely no question about who's on first in foreign policy—it's Vance not Brzezinski."

Last spring, a State Department official recalls, "was the only time Vance wasn't comfortable with Brzezinski, who had just been on "Meet the Press" sounding like Henry Kissinger. Vance was really frightened by Brzezinski's attack on the Cubans in Africa."

Later, during the height of the controversy over Cuban and Soviet involvement in Africa, Vance was scheduled to give a speech on the subject to the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He sent Carter a draft of the speech, far less hard-lined than the Administration's (largely Brzezinski's) policy at the time, and promptly received the President's approval. Carter was upset that Brzezinski had gotten him into a quarrel with Fidel Castro, an Administration official notes, and he didn't like Brzezinski's performance on "Meet the Press" where the National Security Advisor kept talking about himself while hardly mentioning the President.

DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR

Vance scores

"Carter has the highest respect for Vance's judgment and loyalty," says the White House aide, "He is now clearly the dominant advisor on foreign policy." At the Camp David summit Vance was constantly at Carter's side. "Except for the President himself, Vance was the star," a participant remembers, "he did a lot of negotiating, Zbig played a very secondary role." •

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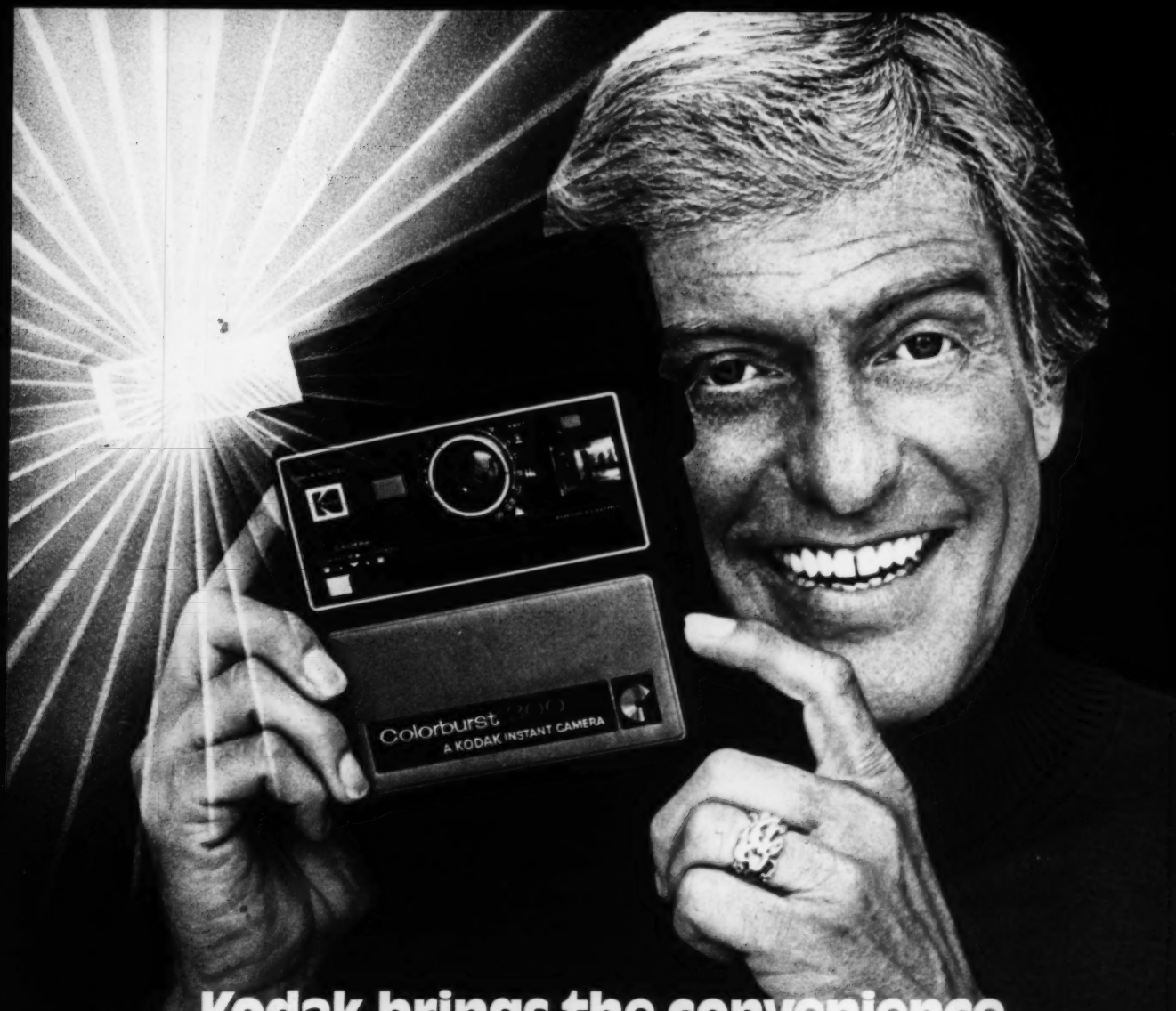

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A book of lists

Koreagate Witness Explores Sensitive Parts of Congress

Suzi Park Thomson, the sultry Korean temptress and intimate factotum to former House Speaker Carl Albert, plans, in her upcoming book, to tell about the diminutive speaker's preference for Oriental women his own size (he is 5'1"), and to describe how the Korean government slipped money to a U.S. congressman at the Walker Hill gambling tables in Seoul—that is, if her lawyers don't strip the information from the just completed manuscript. Thomson has testified several times before a federal grand jury in Washington and the House Ethics Committee, but federal investigators grumble that she has been less than candid in revealing what she knows about Korean influence buying and the KCIA.

Pulp novelist Robin Moore, involved in financing, writing and editing the book, said the Korean mistress is "finally letting it all hang out." Moore said the book will contain "a lot of hot stuff" on House Speaker Tip O'Neill, and other congressmen, and he is scurrying to get the 800-page manuscript down to size and into print before the November election.

But Thomson's lawyers are taking a second look at the autobiography, co-written by Gene Zack and Moore. They are reportedly intent on censoring many of the names, including the identities of congressmen and public figures who Ms. Thomson was involved with personally. Moore, however, is determined to keep the names in. His company, Condor Publishing, acquired the book entitled *Suzi, the Korean Connection*, after other publishers wouldn't touch it. "Other publishing houses were afraid they would be sued," he said, "but it doesn't bother me. Condor is a small company. If we get sued, we'll just fold."

—Ken Cummins

Thomson: Washington figure

For eyes only

FTC Commends Cost-cutting Optician

In 1972, childhood friends Daniel Goldberg and Phil Wolman moved into an abandoned rock concert box office and opened "For Eyes: Opticians with Insight." Now, there are 29 For Eyes stores employing 250 people in 10 states. And twenty more branches are scheduled to open next year. Each outlet will continue to charge $29 (no extra fee for wire frames and photocromatic, plastic, oversize or tinted lenses) for the same glasses other stores often price at over $60.

Goldberg admits to being an entrepreneur. Last year sales totaled $3 million though, according to Goldberg, only $30,000 of that was profit. "We're like a lot of people who came out of the sixties and wanted to create an alternative market," he says, "But instead of making pottery or sewing wallets, we're into making glasses."

The Federal Trade Commission and the Senate Select Committee on Small Business recently commended the company for providing high quality eye glasses at low prices. "You see," Goldberg adds flatly, "the way we see it, seeing is a necessity. It shouldn't be price-gouged."

—Debra Weiner

NEIL BENSON

Goldberg sees things differently

Both sides now

SDS Descendant Accuses Anti-Defamation League Of Funding Nazi Party

Their leaflets claim that the Anti-Defamation League is "being run by the same Jewish families who were directly responsible for Hitler's rise to power," and that "leading members of the ADL fund the American Nazi Party."

The "Provisional Committee to Clean-up the B'nai Brith's Anti-Defamation League," further asserts that the ADL "is being used as a conduit for terrorist operations." In recent months, young zealots have descended on New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Seattle to spread their message.

It may sound like another bizarre anti-semitic thrust by the reactionary right, but the inspiration behind this new group comes from the ultra-left-wing National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), aka U.S. Labor Party. A spinoff of the SDS, the NCLC quickly became notorious for its hysterical predictions of imminent nuclear holocosts, crackpot Rockefeller conspiracy theories, and harassment and physical assaults against rival leftists.

NCLC has publically come to the defense of former President Richard Nixon, Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo, former United Mine Workers president and convicted murderer Tony Boyle, and the leadership of the scandal-plagued Teamsters Union. The group has verbally assaulted Ralph Nader, Ceasar Chavez' United Farm Workers, Steel Workers insurgent Ed Sadlowski, and now the ADL. The NCLC has repeatedly attempted to pass on intelligence information about its opponents to the FBI and other police agencies.

Shunned by its old comrades on the left, the group of late has openly courted reactionary extremists, including the Liberty Lobby and remnants of George Wallace's American Independent Party. "Our closest political allies," explained NCLC founder Lyndon H. LaRouche during his 1976 presidential campaign, "are the Republican National Committee and the John Birch Society."

—Paul Grabowicz

Special cases

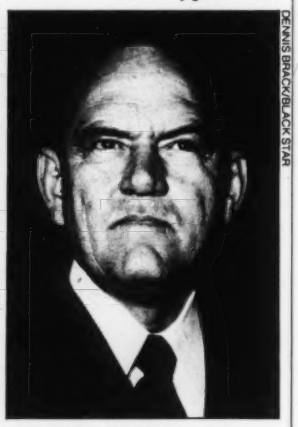
Justice Finances FBI Defendants

The Justice Department will be picking up the tab for the defense of former FBI agents involved in civil suits for having carried out illegal break-ins during the early 1970's. Ironically, government attorneys will also be prosecuting former FBI Director L. Patrick Gray and two of his top aides for approving the break-ins.

"It's our practice to provide counsel for federal employees sued in connection with their work," says a spokesman for the Justice Department's Civil Division, "so long as they are not under indictment for the same conduct alleged in the civil suit." With the department willing to spring for private lawyers at rates as high as $60 per hour (limited to a maximum of 120 hours per month), and litigation expected to drag on for years, billings are expected to run into hundreds of thousands of dollars at taxpayers expense.

The victims of the FBI excesses who have brought suit, however, are getting no such help with their legal expenses. Even if they win in court, relief will not necessarily be forthcoming since attorneys' fees in federal civil cases are awarded at the discretion of the court.

—Dorothy J. Samuels



DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR

Gray: Justice for some

Covering up

Kentuckians Balk at Restoring Mined Land to Original Contour

Kentucky strip mine officials are prepared to gut a major feature of the surface mine law because of a reported "deluge" of protest mail from eastern Kentucky landowners. According to state officials, these mountain landowners object to the law's provision which requires that strip mined land must be returned to its "approximate original contour."

Supposedly, the flattened, stripped land is much needed because of the shortage of level property in the hills. Kentucky officials say they are willing to suspend the original contour portion of the law if the strip miners cover up the highwall—the portion of the mountain that remains standing after the coal and soil covering it are removed—and submit postmining land use plans.

The deluge of protests, however, appears to be little more than a heavy mountain dew. In all, about 40 letters and two petitions with 191 names have been received by state officials. Actually, the mined land in question is in remote, largely uninhabited areas. The outrage expressed by Kentucky politicians and officials seems to be a contrived attempt to satisfy the strip operators, who have been growling about costs of complying with the statue.

Since the 1960s, an estimated 17,000 acres a year have been stripped in the eastern part of the state. However, besides a few grape arbors and some lone buildings, nothing much has been done with the land. In fact, the one major housing project planned on stripped mountain land has encountered a doubling of costs in stabilizing the property even before construction begins.

—Bill Bishop

Growing, growing, gone

Berkeley Professor Finds Fungus Solution to Paraquat Problem

A Berkeley professor says he is experimenting with a fungus which kills marijuana plants and can be used as a safe alternative to the dangerous herbicide paraquat. The fungus, according to Dr. Arthur McCain, a University of California plant pathologist, attacks the weed through its roots, is harmless to other piant species and has no known effects on people.

Despite the bitter controversy surrounding the government's use of paraquat to destroy marijuana, the feds have paid little attention to McCain's study. "My impression is that people in law enforcement are more interested in playing cops and robbers than in my research," gripes McCain. "The Drug Enforcement Administration is mostly interested in bullshit, like me not giving away my marijuana seeds."

McCain, who formerly received Department of Agriculture funding for his project, has tried unsuccessfully to provoke a response from the sluggish DEA. An Agriculture botanist who worked closely with McCain is at a loss to explain the government's inaction. "So far as I know, we simply haven't done a damn thing," he said.

—Ray Riegert

Shedding a different light

Laser Beams Bounced Off Building for Arts Sake

Melisande Charles is putting the finishing touches on plans for a $16,000 laser show. She insists that the spectators' appreciation will be enhanced by the bureaucratic red tape-cutting that went into the creation. "I'm a conceptualist," says Minneapolis Arts Commission Director Charles. "It's only through the bureaucratic process that the work becomes possible."

On October 5 and 6, a laserist will mount the city's tallest building, a 57-story shaft, with three laser projectors. The beams will be aimed at three other buildings which, according to Charles, symbolize art, business and government. Four searchlights on the ground will form a canopy over the lasers.

The "process" involved meeting federal laser show guidelines, contacting the Food and Drug Administration and the state radiological health unit, buying a $1 million insurance policy and clearing the show with the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA, apprehensive about the accidental sizzling of pilot's retinas, has restricted air traffic within a five-mile radius of the show.

The problems still to be solved include coaxing more money out of area corporations and the possibility of an exceptionally low cloud cover. Still, Charles is more involved with bureaucracy and the "need to do the whole societal thing to produce art," than with meteorology.

—Tony Schmitz

PAUL SHAMBROOM

Minneapolis skyline at its peak

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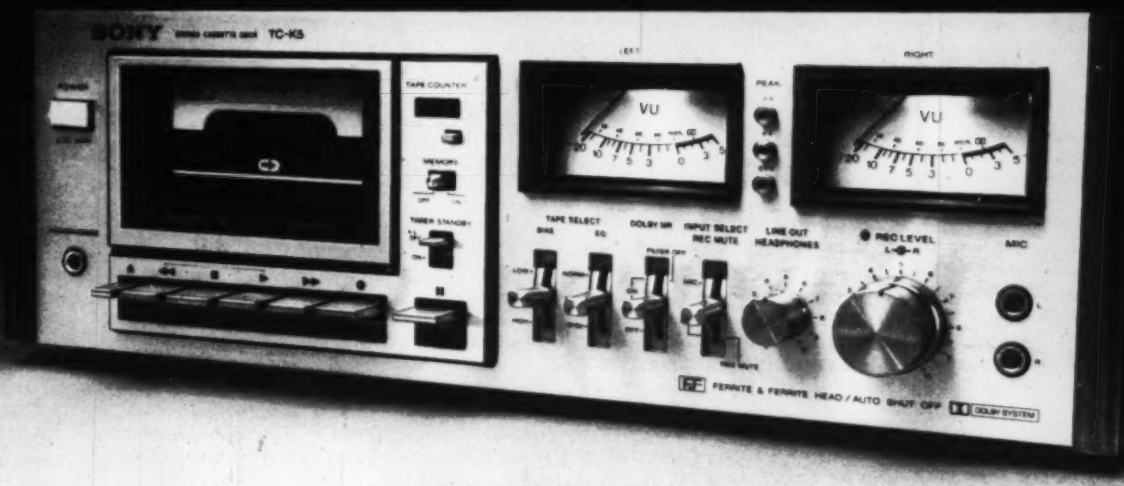

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NewTimes

Jimmy Carter Gets It Together

Camp David was the culmination of the swiftest political recovery in the history of the presidency

by Robert Shrum

Two days after Carter, Begin and Sadat came down the mountain, Theodore White was sitting in his shirtsleeves in the office of Carter media-man Jerry Rafshoon. They were discussing the remaking of the President 1978. A week earlier, one imagined, White (currently preparing his book on the 1980 national election) would more appropriately have been seated in the office of Senator Edward Kennedy. Now he seemed to belong in Jimmy Carter's White House—because Jimmy Carter himself at last seemed to belong there. "Jerry is so happy," said a partner in the advertising firm Rafshoon headed before joining the President's staff. "His idea of heaven would be if the 1980 election were next Tuesday."

Even before Camp David, Carter's inner political circle—Rafshoon, top aide Hamilton Jordan, press secretary Jody Powell, and pollster Pat Caddell—were anticipating an upward turn in the President's popularity. For one thing, as one White House aide explained, they believed that "the press is feeling guilty about pack journalism"—and that reporters were about ready to reverse the direction of the pack. A long-time Carter adviser half-seriously suggested this summer to Rafshoon: "We could sit back and do nothing and rely on the natural rhythm of the media." In fact, the columns were changing prior to Camp David. "You might call them favorable; we would call them thoughtful," says a White House assistant. Across the country, the journalistic winds were shifting: the *Christian Science Monitor* saw Carter "enjoying a mild run of success"; the *Dallas Times Herald* reviewed his pending anti-inflation policy and editorialized that "it all sounds good"; the *Witchita Eagle & Beacon*, in the heart of the angry Republican farm belt, was writing of his "triumphs" and his "strong leadership style."

But Carter's suddenly favorable press was based on more than mere media whims. At last his major legislative proposals, such as those dealing with energy and civil service reform, were coming up for votes—and they were surviving. "Carter has this propensity for very ambitious, comprehensive approaches," a White House aide says. "They take a lot of time, like the energy bill—a lot more time than he realized when he came in here." Presidential assistant Anne Wexler argues that "the prospect of adjournment has finally forced Congress to make decisions."

One reason those decisions have been falling Carter's way is that his administration has learned how to operate effectively on Capitol Hill. The task-force approach that secured the passage of the Panama Treaty has become standard operating procedure for all important legislation. "It's used on every priority issue," Wexler says. "There's constant coordination of the political operation, public and congressional liaison, and the press and media effort."

This legislative teamwork reflects what a trusted Carter adviser calls "a general change in the White House. We've had a genuine focusing of resources and effort." Carter has all but abandoned his earlier belief in diffused, decentralized power within the executive branch. The President initially promised Cabinet officers that they could pick their appointees without White House interference; Carter aide Tim Kraft now reviews—and approves or disapproves—all such appointments.

In April, Wexler, a politically sensitive Democratic insider, was brought in to deal with constituency and interest groups, including those she had worked with during the 1968 McCarthy and the 1972 McGovern campaigns. At the heart of the staff changes is Rafshoon, drafted for White House duty this May at Rosalynn Carter's urging. Rafshoon not only tends the President's public image, he also superintends media strategy across Cabinet departments. Since his arrival, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski has not once quarreled in public with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Technically, there is no chief of staff in the Carter White House; Hamilton Jordan, a prime candidate, has never been interested in the job. Now, however, although considered something of a loner, Rafshoon is said to be giving the West Wing an overall direction in terms of themes and priorities. "In that sense," says one staffer, "he is chief of staff."

"The difference in this place is night and day," says another White House operative, who a year ago was defensively pleading: "We're trying badly to do good—very badly."

One administration source who deals with the President regularly insists that the improvement is not so much a matter of technique or staff changes, though they have been important, as it is a reflection of Jimmy Carter's own attitude: "He's regained his confidence." One of Congress' most perceptive officials agrees: "He came to town on a white horse and he fell off. So for a while he mounted the old gray mares. He did whatever Russell Long told him on taxes; last year, he gave Tip O'Neill a no-veto pledge."

But this August 17, Carter vetoed the $37 billion defense authorization bill as excessive and extravagant; no President ever had cast such a veto before. At a White House luncheon meeting the day before his veto, Carter received conflicting advice from his aides on the matter. Anne Wexler and domestic policy chief Stuart Eizenstat, both liberals, didn't argue for the bill on its merits, but they

Photograph by Susan McElhinney/Newsweek/Woodfin Camp

worried about the political backlash of a veto. Budget Director James McIntyre and Rafshoon responded that Carter had to take a stand and this was the time to take it. Still, they all shared the fear that if Congress overrode a veto, it would vividly reconfirm Carter's political weakness.

But Carter decided that he would appear even weaker if he didn't veto the defense bill. "Congress had virtually ignored him while amending his original defense request," explains a White House assistant. "They were treating him as not even a factor in their decisions. He had to put them on notice that he wasn't weak and powerless." The day following the veto, the President repeatedly told White House associates that he had not felt better since his inauguration. "In Carter's mind," says one of them, "it was the beginning of a new sense of taking charge."

Mondale aide Richard Moe headed the informal task force assigned to sustain the veto. The Vice President, whom one senator now characterizes as "the administration's heavy hitter on the Hill," placed a Rolodex-worth of calls to House members. Carter himself phoned those who were still wavering as the vote approached. It was supposed to be close; but in the end, the White House didn't just win with the necessary one-third plus one. The President won 204 to 191—a clear majority.

"If you take the period immediately prior to the Camp David agreement, it marked the best days of Carter's Presidency," says Peter Hart, one of the capital's most respected pollsters, who worked for Morris Udall against Carter in 1976. ABC-Louis Harris polls showed the President's approval rating rising from 30 percent in early August to 42 percent a few days after the summit.

Gradually, it seemed, nuts-and-bolts effort might have put Jimmy back together again. But Camp David brought a leap of political light years in a single bound. Carter suddenly became the man who "had done something Kissinger never could," in the words of pollster Hart. "The amateur had achieved what the diplomat *extraordinaire* could not."

Publicly, Kissinger himself offered glowing praise for the "historic" agreement. Privately, " he was green," an associate reports. Old arrogance dies hard: Within days, Kissinger was publicly lecturing Carter on foreign policy-making. The President, he commented, should not have involved himself personally at Camp David, even though the enterprise had worked out, because of the risk of "failure."

Kissinger's remark was a precise reflection of the conventional wisdom that prevailed in Washington both before and during the Camp David meetings. One of Carter's supposed defects—his inexperience in Washington—was a crucial factor in getting him to the summit at all. "Anyone really experienced in Washington wouldn't have taken the risk," says Peter Hart. "Carter was just inexperienced enough to try it."

While it may have been unorthodox, the Camp David summit was far from impulsive or ill-prepared. Despite the gathering legend that the idea sprang spontaneously into the President's mind one morning, it actually was considered

Publicly, Kissinger offered glowing praise for the agreement. Privately, he was green

carefully, over a relatively long period, by Carter and his closest foreign policy advisers. The concept began taking form after Vice President Mondale's early summer visit to the Middle East. Mondale came home with some tough conclusions: First, an American initiative was essential to keep the peace process alive; second, distrust between Israel and Egypt was so high that the U.S. would have to assume an active role in the negotiations, both mediating between the parties and formulating the compromises; finally, the negotiations had to be insulated from the press. The two sides had fallen into a debilitating war of leaks and press releases whenever they convened to negotiate peace. All this was discussed at several of the regularly scheduled Friday White House breakfast sessions on foreign policy, which include Carter, Mondale, Vance, Brzezinski and Hamilton Jordan. It was clear to all that no American official except the President could hope to keep the garrulous Menachem Begin and the mercurial Anwar Sadat quiet and isolated long enough to eke out an agreement.

So Carter and his top advisers finally decided on the first truly working summit, away from reporters, with no fixed deadline, since Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin gathered secretly during World War II. "It was a throwback to those days when summits were really summits," says a State Department planner. Mondale contended that there would be no political downside to the summit, no matter what the outcome, if administration officials could contain public expectations. Which they did. "Before this, Carter's people used to tell us what they were going to do," Peter Hart says, "and then they explained why they had failed. Here they didn't tell us what they were going to do. They controlled the news out of Camp David. And then they delivered the goods."

In delivering the agreement between Israel and Egypt, two of Carter's other presumed deficiencies—his single-mindedness and his absorption in detail—again became indispensable assets. "He was in the middle of the writing process, involved in every word of the documents," says an American who watched in wonder. "It was impressive—his command, his ability. I don't think any President has ever been so deeply involved in the fine print." Carter,who once personally kept the log for the White House tennis courts, now kept as precise a track of the strands, nuances and alternative formulas of the Mideast impasse. The President sat alone with lawyers from the Egyptian and Israeli delegations, personally guiding them through verbal minefields. "Other presidents," an American official suggests, "would have left the details to subordinates, who wouldn't have had the authority to push the debates to a resolution."

Carter himself wrote in a sentence on the future of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. He persuaded Begin to agree to "decide" rather than just to "discuss" the status of the area after five years; in the interim, Begin conceded, Israel would end its military government there, while retaining some military forces in West Bank defensive positions. It was a fine balance between Sadat's demand for total withdrawal and Begin's initial offer of virtually none.

The snag that developed on the tenth day of the summit centered unexpectedly on the Sinai Desert lands that Israel had captured from Egypt in 1967. Here Sadat was absolutely insistent on complete withdrawal, while Begin wanted to retain four airbases and was reluctant to take the domestic political heat for removing Israeli settlements. Thereupon, Carter switched tactics: he dispatched Vice President Mondale to Begin and Sadat to say that the summit should end that weekend, with or without an agreement. The President and his men knew that American Jews had pressed Begin to compromise at least a little, to give up something; they calculated that Begin did not wish to bear the onus of a summit breakdown, especially when an agreement on the West Bank relatively favorable to Israel was almost in hand. In the formula that finally was accepted, Egypt conditioned a peace agreement with Israel on the removal of the Sinai settlements. Begin would ask the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, whether to remove them; he assured Carter and Sadat that the Knesset would go along. As for the airbases in the Sinai, American dollars won the day: In return for an Israeli retreat, Carter pledged the U.S. would construct two new bases in Isra-

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Even the President's oft-belittled religiosity proved an asset at this summit. When Sadat was on the verge of walking out, Carter had bluntly informed him that this would "ruin" their personal relationship and jeopardize official relations between Egypt and the United States. Then, more gently, he had reminded Sadat that they both had asked for God's help; Sadat agreed to stay. "The most frequently spoken word at Camp David was God," a State Department expert recalls only half-facetiously.

There are many who believe that God will be sorely needed to hold the Camp David accords together. A high administration source worries: "It's all very precarious." On Tuesday, September 19, the day after Carter's exultant speech to a joint session of the Congress, a nervous Sadat met with the Arab ambassadors in Washington. "He was shaking," Kuwaiti Ambassador Khalid Jaffar remembers. "We all listened in silence."

Yet Carter and Secretary of State Vance crafted the Camp David agreement so that while Israel did not concede Palestinian independence on the West Bank or a Palestinian entity in federation with Jordan, Egypt could argue among the Arabs that this would be the inevitable outcome. At a September 20 reception at the Lebanese embassy, with the noncommittal envoy of Jordan listening attentively, Egyptian Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal fervently contended that "self-rule" on the West Bank, which the Israelis had accepted, was all the Palestinians needed: "It is legalistic to say that the Palestinians cannot use this to get what they want." What about Begin's statements that Israel would never yield sovereignty over the West Bank, asked an Algerian diplomat. "Let Begin talk," Ghorbal replied. "He is digging his own grave." Even an influential member of the American-Israeli lobby volunteers that "after five years, Begin won't be Prime Minister. The Palestinians will get far more than he says they will."

Even if such logic fails to attract widespread Arab backing, as seems likely, the Camp David documents were drafted to facilitate at least minimal support from Saudi Arabia. The oil-rich desert kingdom virtually sustains the Egyptian economy. The Saudis might not endorse the West Bank agreement, since they are devout Moslems intent on Israeli withdrawal from Jerusalem; but because that agreement and the one calling for peace between Israel and Egypt were not connected, Carter and Vance figured the Saudis could reject the former while permitting Egypt the latter without a loss of Saudi subsidies. Carter pointed this out to Sadat as one vital advantage of a separate peace agreement. And within days after Camp David, the Saudis affirmed the right of "any Arab country" to restore "its occupied lands by means of armed struggle *or peaceful endeavors*."

One State Department official believes that even if the summit agreements do unravel, it will happen over a long period of time, so that intervening causes will be blamed and Carter will keep the credit he earned at the summit. Peter Hart thinks that in terms of the President's domestic standing, the ultimate fate of the agreements is secondary. "Camp David was a delineation of character," he says. "Carter showed how effectively he could negotiate—that he could solve seemingly intractable problems."

Hart concludes that the President now has "far greater credibility" in dealing with other problems, especially on the Hill. Carter won his first congressional test after Camp David, on the natural gas bill, by the wide margin of 59 to 39 in the Senate. The vote against recommitting the bill to the House-Senate conference committee reflected the generally increased competence of the administration at least as much as the afterglow of the summit.

The President used Camp David even before it ended for leverage on the natural gas legislation. He not only made calls from the summit to doubtful senators; he set Secretary of State Vance to the same task. "Vance didn't know anything about the details of the bill," one senator says, "but he gamely drew a vivid picture of a disaster in international economic policy if it lost."

After Carter left for Camp David, Vice President Mondale became the most active lobbyist as well as the chief strategist for the bill. A list was drawn of senators who might be moved and of who might influence them. Mondale, along with Federal Reserve Board Chairman G. William Miller, Energy Secretary James Schlesinger and anti-inflation jawboner Robert Strauss were scheduled for an incessant round of breakfasts, lunches and meetings. The list even targeted several announced opponents, including McGovern, Muriel Humphrey and New Hampshire Senator John Durkin. The effort failed with the first two, but Durkin turned around on the recommittal question. Perhaps the most critical convert was Maine Senator Edmund Muskie. Carter, Mondale and Miller together persuaded him that without a natural gas bill, foreign confidence in the already beleaguered dollar would be shattered. Every New England senator went Muskie's way—except Connecticut's Lowell Weicker and Edward Kennedy—and Kennedy was convinced to be a less than vigorous adversary. "The administration neutralized him," Senator James Abourezk, one of the leaders of the opposition, complains. "He didn't do a thing."

There are only two vital issues left before 1980, says one Carter aide — "inflation and SALT, the economy and peace"

When the natural gas bill finally passes, as now seems nearly certain, Carter will rightly hail it and the rest of the energy legislation as the country's first national energy program ever. Administration officials privately admit, in the words of one, that the natural gas compromise "may be a bad bill, but we have to get some kind of bill. We have to put this issue behind us." Otherwise, he fears, Carter will spend the next two years fighting the energy issue to a stalemate in Congress.

Another official says that "the President recognizes that he trusted some people too much on the energy bill"—especially James Schlesinger. The lesson, while costly, may be valuable. "Rafshoon is telling him that he has to go back to trusting his basic instincts," a White House assistant reports. "For 18 or 19 months he was too willing to trust the experts."

A self-confident Carter has become increasingly wary of their expertise. His skepticism may let him use the time Camp David has bought him to bring inflation under control. It is now running at an annual rate of 11 percent, with economists seemingly running out of answers. "I'm really scared," one administration economist admits. "I'm not sure what we should do." Carter himself is sure of one thing: he no longer wants to follow his economists' failing policies with more of the same. "He kept pressing in this area, where he wasn't getting any answers," a White House aide recounts. "He was tired of hearing that nothing could be done." Within days after the summit, the administration was ready to announce a policy of voluntary wage and price guidelines to be enforced through presidential persuasion. Robert Strauss insists that Carter would *never* move beyond this to mandatory controls. "'Never' could be about six months before the New Hampshire primary," responds a 1976 Carter political adviser. "Unless Carter comes to grips with inflation, the gleam of this September will go a glimmering."

"Camp David only got us even," says one White House official. "It was a hell of a long way from where we were to even, but in the supermarket, prices are

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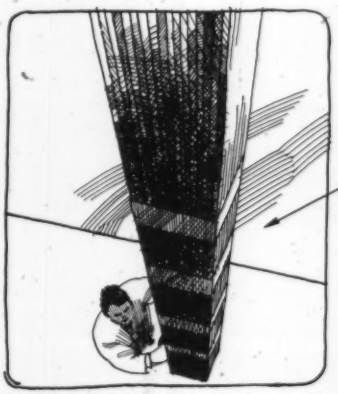

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still climbing." Polls tend to confirm that analysis: In virtually every survey, Carter's approval rating has sharply risen to just about 50 percent; but as Louis Harris has reported, there remains deep dissatisfaction with the administration on inflation. A presidential associate argues that there are only two vital issues left before 1980—"inflation and SALT, the economy and peace."

While Camp David merely buys Carter time on inflation, it almost certainly means more Senate votes, perhaps enough for victory, in support of a strategic arms treaty with the Soviet Union. "On national security issues, a President can usually prevail because he has a special authority," explains John Holum, one of the most politically sensitive of the Senate's arms policy experts. Before Camp David, Carter seemed to be losing that authority: An ABC-Harris poll showed over 70 percent disapproval of his foreign policy. The summit transformed that rating into a 56 to 38 margin of approval. When the SALT debate begins, it will no longer be persuasive to suggest that Senator Jackson, the leader of the hardliners, knows better than a President who has outperformed Henry Kissinger on the most perennial of all foreign policy problems—the Middle East. "Ratification of SALT," pollster Hart surmises, "may prove to be an interesting byproduct of Camp David."

"The new Carter administration," as one of its chief operatives says, "still has a long way to go." In congressional relations, its competence still leaves much to be desired. When an issue is not top priority and is thus left to the ministrations of Frank Moore, Carter's day-to-day man on the Hill, "the result can be a terrible mess," mourns one Democratic senator. He characterizes Moore as "improved, yes—an improved klutz."

One influential congressional assistant who generally supports the administration does not regard its recent success in Congress as a product of skill, but of what he calls "Carter's retreat to conservatism. The President won on the defense appropriations veto because of the anti-spending mood." Yet Carter has threatened to veto the tax cut passed by the House because it shortchanges lower-income families. A White House official involved in the issue stresses that Carter means it—that "he won't sign just any tax bill that comes down the pike. There's a feeling here now that we know what we're doing, that we ought to fight for our beliefs."

Indeed, despite the indications of a rightward trend in national politics, Carter has become steadily more sensitive to traditional Democratic constituencies. The defense veto pleased liberals, as would a fight for a more equitable tax cut. Relations with black leaders have improved; Jesse Jackson has been blaming Congress and "special political and economic interests" for resisting Carter policies that "are generally moving in the right direction." With wage and price guidelines on the horizon, Carter was careful two days after Camp David, in a speech to the United Steelworkers of America, to absolve labor of the responsibility for inflation. He then announced that labor law reform, filibustered by conservatives in the Senate this year, will be his top legislative priority in 1979.

The candidate of open diplomacy became the President whose finest hour flowed from the most secret summit negotiations in three decades

Of all Democratic constituencies, the one where the President was in the most trouble and has recovered the most is the Jewish community. The Camp David accords promise Israel, at a minimum, a separate peace with Egypt. "There's a great sense of optimism among American Jews," says Mark Siegel, a one-time Carter aide who resigned last spring to protest administration policies that he viewed as tilting toward the Arabs. Now he believes that "the President's rating will go way up in the Jewish community." Prior to the summit, a private Harris survey found Jewish voters favoring Edward Kennedy over Carter for the 1980 Democratic nomination by 72 to 21 percent. Following Camp David, Kennedy told a reporter that he would no longer have to knock down endless stories that he intended to challenge the President for the nomination. He even suggested that Carter deserves the Nobel Peace Prize.

"Across the board," says Carter pollster Pat Caddell, "Camp David has reconfirmed the cliche that the President is the one political actor who can make his own breaks, who can change his situation with one stroke." Never had there been such wide agreement on Jimmy Carter's inevitable failure as there was this summer—except in 1975 when he was first a candidate for President. "Back in the campaign, with people literally laughing at him, he kept going with this great equanimity," recalls Greg Schneiders, an astute non-Georgian who has been with Carter from the early days. "And he was confident even before Camp David that he could vindicate his presidency."

To do so, Carter had to discard some of his own most frequently asserted assumptions. The candidate of a smaller, weaker White House staff recently has been concentrating power there. The candidate of open diplomacy became the President whose finest hour flowed from the most secret negotiations at the summit in three decades. But as Franklin Roosevelt, who pledged a balanced budget in 1932, could have told Carter, a sensible inconsistency makes good policy and better politics. Carter will be blamed if inflation does not abate; he may not be re-elected in 1980. But at the very least, Camp David has set a new baseline for public perception of this President: he has demonstrated that he is competent to hold the office. That is a far cry from the recent *New Republic* verdict that Carter "appears to have made incompetence an art." Or as one important Democrat expresses it: "Never again will President Carter be a two-word joke."

Even Carter's speech to Congress after Camp David was more presidential. It had a coherence and a kind of simple eloquence heard in no Carter address since he accepted the Democratic nomination two years ago. The President delivered it well, though sometimes haltingly. He will never be an orator. But standing at the rostrum of the House, Jimmy Carter conveyed a sense of self-assurance, of grace, of the qualities that make a man President in popular feeling as well as in political fact.

"He's created a mystique about his Presidency," Peter Hart says. "The feeling around Congress," as New Hampshire's Senator Durkin senses it, "is that Carter's not only earned a spot on the first team—he deserves to be the captain."Carter's predecessors had similar moments that sealed their authority (e.g., John Kennedy in the missile crisis), but there was a very special feeling in this case. As Carter finished his speech, with Sadat and Begin in the gallery, more than a few members of Congress wiped tears from their eyes. No one could remember an occasion of such unanimous good feeling in the House chamber. After his speech, as he walked up the aisle toward the chamber door, senators and representatives reached out, not ritualistically to shake a President's passing hand, but happily because they wanted to touch *this* President. Most of those who stretched out their hands barely knew him personally, few would ever know him well. But these politicians, powerful in their own right, knew something else, and one could see it on their faces as they looked at him. As a member of his Cabinet wrote Jimmy Carter after Camp David: "It's one thing to be elected President, and another thing to become President. This week you became President." ●

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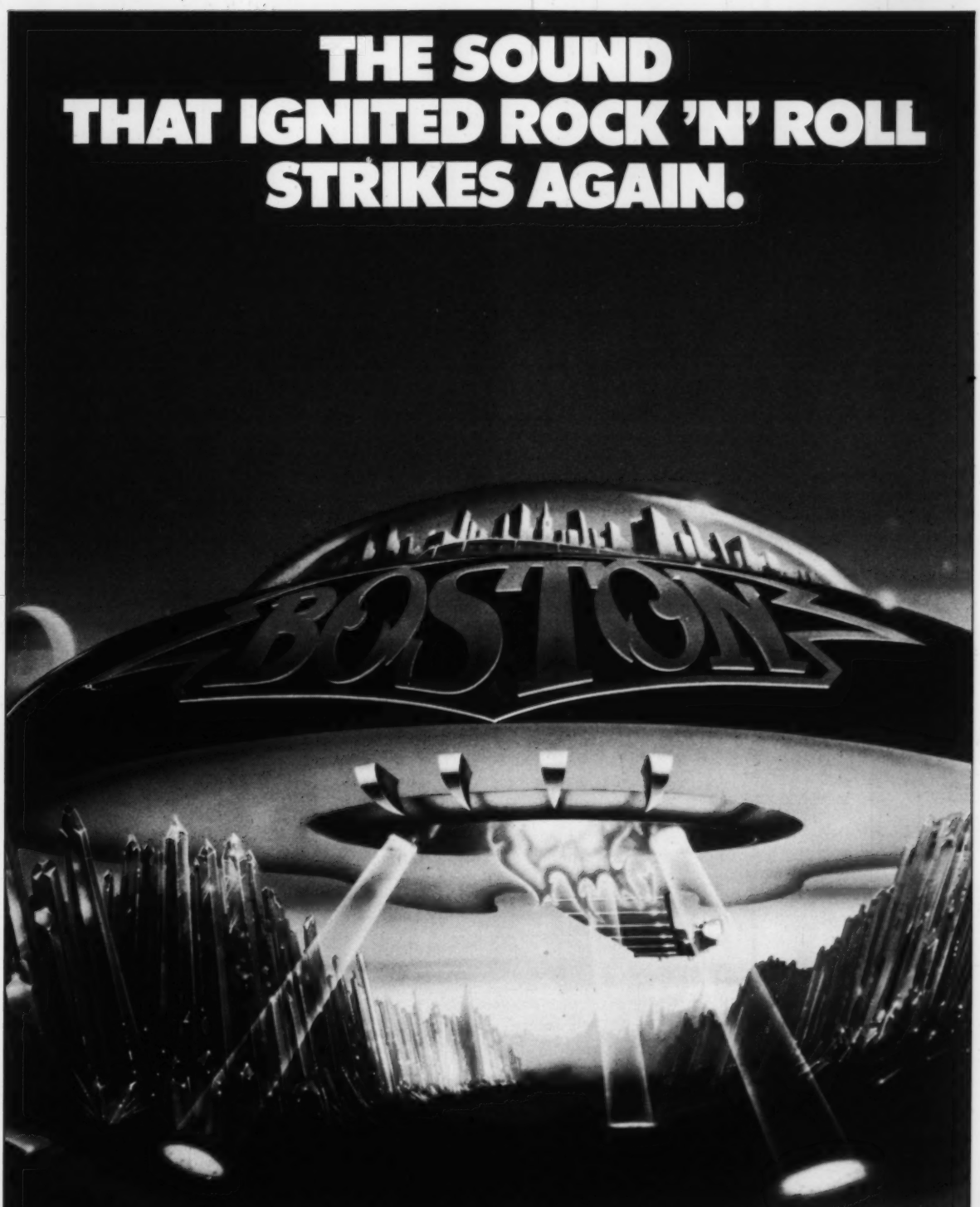

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The Illiterate Cornerback

Fred Buttler was a college football star. He could not read his own name, let alone the playbook. It didn't matter until his eligibility ran out

by Roger Rapoport

After he was released from Los Angeles County Jail one of the first things Fred Buttler did was drive over to Boyle Heights to visit his father's grave. The young man had asked the sheriff's office to excuse him from his cell five days earlier to attend Sam Buttler's funeral. But he was told that sort of thing was against the rules. "Couldn't you just take me there in handcuffs?" he asked. "I won't cause any trouble. I just want to see my daddy one last time."

"No," said the sheriff's deputy, "we can't make any exceptions."

That was why Fred was now making the trip to the east side of town to see his father's burial plot. But as he headed east, Buttler found himself in a familiar quandary. He couldn't figure out the freeway signs. For more than an hour, he zigzagged through downtown streets with the help of friendly service-station attendants. Finally, Fred made his way to the Evergreen Cemetery. But inside the gate, he couldn't understand the signs pointing to his father's plot. Hopelessly confused, he circled the graveyard in his VW bug for an hour before heading back to Inglewood.

Until his football eligibility ran out in the winter of 1976 Fred Buttler was never seriously handicapped by the fact that he couldn't read. A C-plus student during his 16 years of primary, secondary, junior high, senior high and college education, the football player was constantly befriended by teachers at report-card time for the good of the athletic department. But when his gridiron career ended at California State University at Los Angeles and a lifelong dream of making it into the pros evaporated, Buttler moved on to the unemployment line. The natural athlete wouldn't even be able to drive over to pick up his workmen's compensation check if it weren't for the fact that one of his literate friends helped him cheat on his license test.

The story of how Fred Buttler made good grades in school and flunked out in the real world offers a rare look at a growing phenomenon among minority athletes in colleges around the country. A Big Man On Campus from the time he was in seventh grade, Buttler is now unable to read the names of most of the 42 courses listed on his Cal State transcript. He cannot comprehend the titles of classes like theory of gymnastic tumbling, physical conditioning, social recreation, golf, rugby and dance in recreation. But amidst the long two-page list he does find a few words that briefly allow him to emerge from his illiteracy. "Football," says Fred Buttler jabbing at the page, isn't that word *football?*"

A visitor who is reviewing the transcript with him agrees and slides his finger over to the grade column. Fred's dark eyes move across the page to study the letter. After half a minute the former star turns away. "I give up," he says, "what did they give me?"

"An A," the visitor says, "they gave you an A in football."

Dumb jocks have been a standing joke at American colleges for decades. Admitted with embarrassing test scores, shuffled into Mickey Mouse courses, allowed to skip class, benefiting from special tutoring and even furnished with bright students willing to stand in for them at exam time, many intercollegiate athletes never have to give schoolwork a second thought. Even if they don't make the pros, chances are they can find employment through the old-grad network when their playing days end.

But in recent years this amusing syndrome has taken a frightening turn as coaches exploit special admissions programs to recruit minority athletes who would ordinarily never qualify for college. Yesterday's dumb jock has become today's illiterate player, unable even to read the team playbook. Deliberately steered into a curriculum designed to maintain their playing eligibility, the young athletes fail to take the kinds of courses that would remedy their reading and writing problems. But after they've finished their final college game and realize no pro recruiters are waiting in the locker room, these players suddenly discover old friends on the coaching staff can no longer find easy classes for them. Soon they flunk out and wind up working for minimum wage or standing in an unemployment line.

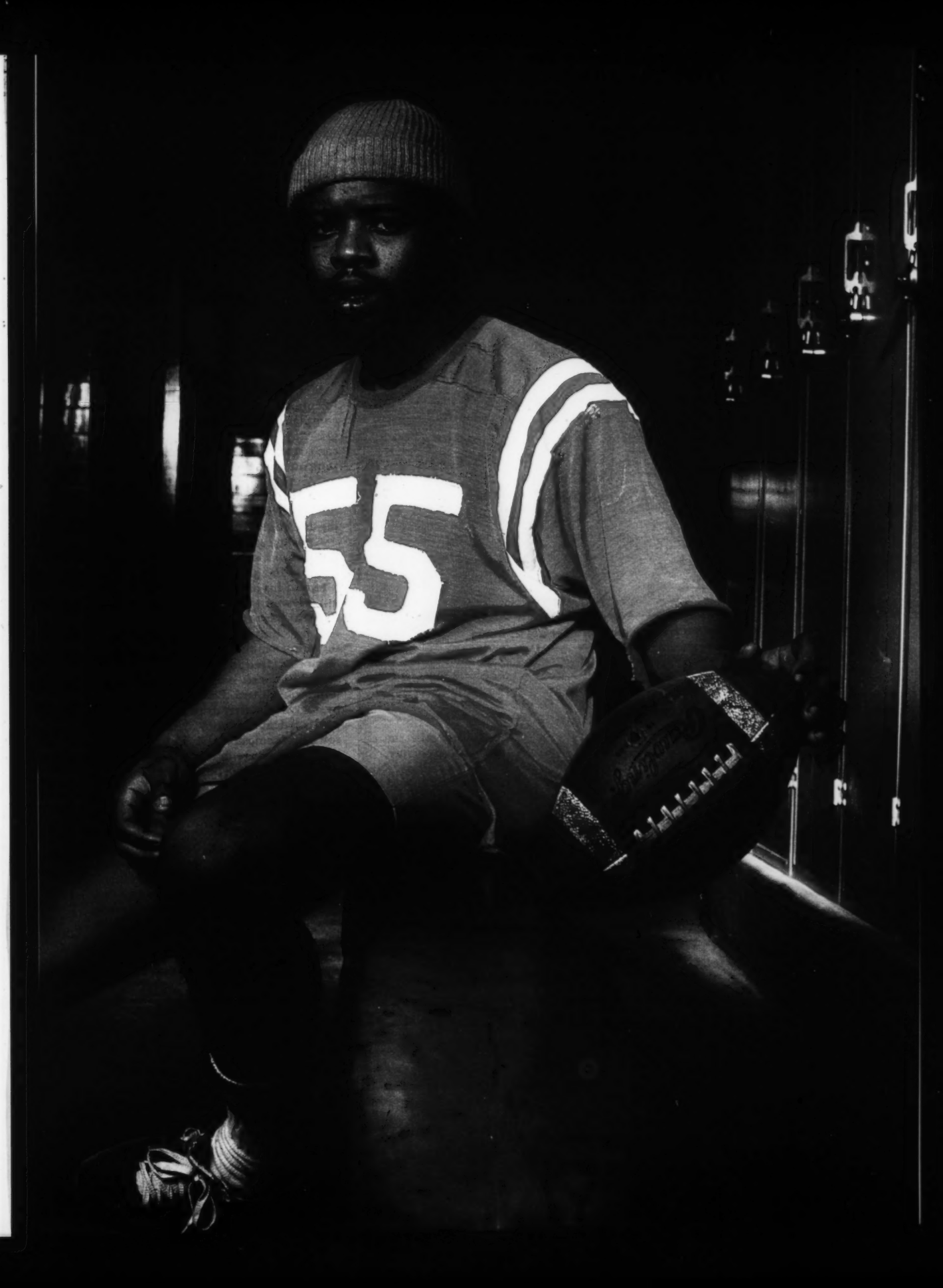
The nation's leading authority on athlete illiteracy, University of California sports sociologist Harry Edwards, indicates this syndrome exists at virtually all 300 American colleges he has lectured at during the past few years:

"I see the pathetic results of this everywhere I go in this country. I'm talking about track teams where a third of the squad is functionally illiterate. I'm talking about players who come up after one of my lectures and tell me, 'Hey, I really dug what you were saying.' When I suggest they check out my book, *The Revolt Of The Black Athlete*, they just shrug, 'You know, I'd really like to do that Dr. Edwards, but I can't read.' My own estimate is that today 25 to 30 percent of the black high school athletes are functionally illiterate. In junior college it's probably about 20 to 25 percent and at four-year colleges probably 15 to 20 percent of the minority players can't read."

To appreciate what Dr. Edwards is talking about it's useful to look at the story of 24-year-old Fred Buttler.

From the day his parents enrolled him at Inglewood's Warren Lane elementary school, hardly anyone could stop talking about Fred's performance on the playing field. One of the first blacks to attend the primary institution, he appeared destined for the kind of gridiron stardom his brother Albert was achieving at local Morningside High. But the eight-year-old quickly found victory had its price when he beat out white competitors in ping-pong tourna-

Photographs by Dorothy Tanous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Buttler and His Mother Edna: His teachers told her not to worry

ments at local Darby Park. As soon as he smashed the winning point Buttler turned to get the jump on sore losers who chased him home. Dashing through alleys, cutting across supermarket parking lots, Fred frequently ended up hiding in the men's room of a local library. His father, an auto mechanic, and mother, who worked as a maid at the Forum, a nearby stadium, encouraged him to persevere and try out for local Little League teams. The child was always the first one to appear on sign-up days, but white coaches weren't about to let him integrate their basketball team. "Sorry," they told him, "but you live in the wrong district." It took player pressure to convince leaders to recruit this black youngster who was humiliating his Warren Lane classmates at football, baseball, soccer, handball, basketball and track.

When it came time to choose up sides other children waited to see where Fred was going before committing themselves. "Everyone always wanted to play on his team," recalls lifelong friend Ken Carr, "because his teams never lost." At Junior Olympics meets parents and children stood in awe as Buttler broke all the records. Soon coaches at Warren Lane waited outside his classroom and asked if he would help them compete against rival elementary schools. While in fifth grade Fred was passed off as a sixth grader for an all-important baseball throw. Veteran teachers still talk about his 255-foot toss that won top honors and set a school record that stands to this day.

While coaches rejoiced over the exploits of this potential superstar, his mother began raising questions about the boy's academic performance. Concerned about his slow progress, she had instructed Warren Lane to hold Fred back a semester in third grade. But this move and a series of remedial reading classes failed to improve his academic performance. At the end of sixth grade she visited the elementary school and asked teachers if he was really ready for Albert Monroe Junior High. "He's a little slow in reading," an instructor told Edna Buttler, "but it's nothing to worry about."

As soon as the junior high school coaches saw Fred try out on their gridiron, they put the seventh grader to work with the eighth-grade team. Doing double duty as a wide receiver and defensive back, he helped lead Monroe to a winning season. During the remainder of the year Buttler, Ken Carr and three other husky black seventh graders built an impressive athletic reputation at the mostly white school. Nicknamed "The Hersheys," this quintet also caught the attention of Morningside High's athletic department.

Fred has perfect recall of the day he and the other four black athletes were summoned by their junior high principal for some good news: "She sat us down in front of her big desk, smiled real nice and said how happy she was to be able to double promote all five of us to the ninth grade. We looked at each other thinking maybe she was joking. Finally Ken Carr asked if she was serious. She said, 'You're just too bright to be in eighth grade.' Now that guy Carr couldn't read much better than me.

"My mother was very upset about sending me to Morningside High, particularly when she heard that the parents of one of the other Hersheys, Michael Ingram, weren't going to let him be double promoted," Buttler said.

Mrs. Buttler was sufficiently dismayed to phone the Monroe principal and complain. "I don't think it's fair," she said, "to send a child to high school who can't read. He's going to end up dropping out for sure."

"We think it's the best for Fred," replied the administrator who explained that Fred would be enrolled in Morningside High's special reading class.

Arriving at the Inglewood secondary institution a year ahead of schedule, the new football player basked in the reputation of his older brother Albert, a star athlete who won the school's "senior of the year" award in 1969 for his work in cooling racial tensions at the rapidly integrating institution.

Albert frequently devoted afterschool time to helping Fred with his homework. And Edna was astonished by the results that appeared on his report card at the end of her youngest son's first semester early in 1969. Somehow the illiterate managed to receive an A in physical education, B's in world history, math and art, plus C's in English and reading. Although Fred's B average slipped down to the C-plus level in subsequent semesters there was no doubt that the teenager was going to get his high school diploma. Teachers kept giving him B's in U.S. history, office practice and advanced art courses. And after flunking the first half of English III Buttler managed to finish the course with a B.

School was so easy for Fred he didn't really even need to bother cracking a book or showing up for class. Friendly teachers gave him private exams, suggested how to fill in the blanks and sometimes waived tests altogether. Rather than judging him through written questions and answers, they periodically handled everything orally. If he made a mistake they gave him another chance or simply put down the right information in his behalf.

The star's schoolmates also envied the preferential treatment Fred received from the athletic department. "When our group came in from the seventh

grade at Monroe the coaches wouldn't let us play what we wanted," remembers Carr. "They said I had to play guard on offense and defense. I explained I didn't want to be on the offensive line; I wanted to run with the ball. The coaches told me to wait until my junior year and they'd give me a chance at the backfield. But when I got to 11th grade they went back on their promise. I was so mad at the end of the season that I refused to play basketball for them. They immediately threatened to send me to Hudnall Opportunity School (a remedial institution) if I didn't get out on the court. I didn't obey and sure enough I was sent over to Hudnall."

Friendly teachers gave him private exams, suggested how to fill in the blanks and sometimes waived tests altogether

While Fred's buddies floundered he became one of the youngest sophomores to star on Morningside High's gridiron. Like his brother Albert, who was now playing football at California State University's Long Beach campus, he made a name for himself on offense and defense. In 11th grade the cornerback helped the Monarchs tie for the coveted Sky League championship.

"After games," Fred recalls, "teachers would see me outside the locker room and tell me to 'Send us tickets when you make it to the pros.' That always made me feel pretty good. No matter how much trouble I had understanding things in class, I always figured I'd make a good living playing ball for the pros. I saw what guys like O.J. Simpson were doing and thought hey, that was pretty good. Doing rent-a-car commercials, showing up with movie stars on the Johnny Carson show and helping cover games for TV seemed like a nice life. Football was going to make me famous. And I knew I wasn't just dreaming because everyone told me I was good."

This self-image was no secret to people like his former Morningside High coach David Van Hoorebeke who now coaches football at Huntington Beach High in Orange County: "He was a very intense player," Van Hoorebeke said. "Fred made it clear he intended to go to the top. Like a lot of black kids he related heavily to black superstars."

Anxious to help out Fred financially Morningside's Assistant Principal Art Callen and Coach Van Hoorebeke contacted a local supermarket that agreed to give the high school's star athlete a job stocking shelves. Edna Buttler, now separated from her husband, was pleased to have Fred bringing home extra money. Unfortunately the 16-year-old wasn't able to contribute to the support of his mother and sister Renetta for long. The market had to let him go because he couldn't read the labels. He kept putting pea cans on green-bean shelves and squash in with the pumpkin filling.

At school Buttler was candid about his illiteracy. He always made a point of informing new teachers about the problem. Some ignored him until it came time to read a Jack London story out loud.

"I can't do it," said Fred staring blankly at "The Call of the Wild."

"He's jiving," cried a classmate as the others started laughing and slapping their textbooks.

School administrators tried to remedy his handicap by assigning him to a series of remedial reading courses. "We did everything with Fred," says Assistant Principal Callen, "but we couldn't figure out what was wrong. It was the damndest thing because he was a bright kid. At one point we even sent him to a special clinic at UCLA which is about as far as you can go to help someone in this field and still he didn't improve. Nothing worked."

Although friends teased Buttler about his reading problem, they were reluctant to challenge him at chess. Coming on quietly in study hall, he would proceed to checkmate Morningside's best players in short order. After being humiliated several times, these chess wizards began begging off from Fred's invitations to play for money.

This was all part of the mystery that was the talk of Morningside High. There were so many things about Buttler his classmates didn't understand. Instead of showing up for class he would take the bus out to Redondo Beach and go bonita fishing with one of his good buddies. After lunch the Big Man On Campus headed off to a friend's house to party with truant schoolmates. The young men and women would dance until shortly before the host's parents were scheduled to return home from work. Then everyone began cleaning up efficiently so no one suspected the mid-afternoon revelry.

The word around campus was that Buttler could get away with hooky because the fix was in at report-card time. Friends had actually seen him turn in blank test sheets and end up with passing grades. Sometimes Fred didn't even bother showing up for big exams.

Although Fred's report cards said he was doing C-plus work, Edna Buttler knew the grades were a bad joke. She watched the way Ken Carr read to him

Sambuca Romana. It's spoken in the best places in Rome.
What do you do when you're wandering along the Piazza del Popolo and you see this great looking woman you think you know from someplace?
You say, "Don't I know you from someplace?"
I did. She turned out to be a great cinema actress I'd admired for years. And very friendly.
"Sambuca Romana?" she asked. I smiled. (What was she saying?)
The waiter brought this spectacular liqueur. A very promising beginning. Not a bad middle either, until her husband appeared two Sambuca Romanas later. In textiles, very rich.
I look at it this way. Lose a woman, gain a great liqueur.
SAMBUCA ROMANA
Biscottini:
Sambuca Romana,
ladyfingers,
butter, almonds.
Sambuca Romana
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from the sports page. She saw him give up reading the menu at Sambo's and simply point to the illustrated cheeseburgers when the waitress arrived.

"What are you going to do if you don't make it to the pros?" she asked him one Monday morning as he headed off to class with an armload of 12th-grade texts that hadn't been touched all weekend. But Fred wasn't worried about the fact that he couldn't read as well as the average second grader at Warren Lane. He knew he would graduate on schedule and be welcomed by coaches at nearby El Camino Junior College. There he could take advantage of top flight remedial programs that would finally solve his reading problems.

Walking home from parties held at friends' homes during school hours, Fred occasionally felt a little guilty about his good fortune. Here he was moving straight toward college with hardly any effort while his friends struggled through Hudnall Opportunity School. It didn't seem fair that he was going to end up an All-American while they were consigned to pumping Super Shell: "Every time a teacher gave me a private exam, read me the questions out loud or just passed me when I left the answer sheet blank I felt kind of funny," Buttler says. "My buddies studied real hard for the same test and often did worse than me. They kept calling me a cheater, but I told them I was just smarter than they realized. None of them believed me."

Fred managed to graduate 190th out of 355 students in Morningside's class of '72. When he arrived at El Camino that fall his advisor, offensive coach Carl Mersola, was not surprised to learn about the athlete's reading problem. Liberal junior college entrance requirements and federal regulations mandating institutions to reserve up to 2 percent of their freshman openings for minority applicants who do not meet admissions standards leave the door open for marginal students. And if the newcomer happens to be black and knows how to play on the gridiron, he's home free. "The way things work now," says physical education instructor Mersola, "a chimpanzee could come and play football."

Because Fred couldn't read the school catalog his advisor had to write down a list of athletic, health and physical education courses which the newcomer dutifully copied onto a sign-up card. Watching Buttler scrawl out the names of subjects that led down the eligibility path, Mersola was certain he was doing the right thing. "I felt sorry for Fred. He wanted to play football. It was all he could do. He couldn't read. If he lost the right to play, he would end up a dropout and be into crime and drugs. It seemed to me that football was the only lifejacket he had."

Instead of putting Buttler into a degree-oriented curriculum that would have meant sudden academic death, the advisor repeatedly let him sign up for activity classes like football, handball, basketball, weight training, bowling and volleyball. Coaches who taught physical education and health courses obliged the cornerback with the same kind of oral exams he had taken back at Morningside. But periodically teachers refused to give the star player a break. This caused problems in courses like Body Fender Repair. Although Fred had no difficulty performing repair work in the shop he ran into trouble on exams.

"After games," Fred recalls, "teachers would see me outside the locker room and tell me to 'send us tickets when you make it to the pros.' That always made me feel pretty good"

"Sorry," the young man said while depositing the blank test sheet on his teacher's desk, "but I can't understand any of this."

"It's all based on material taken from the handbook."

"I know but I can't understand the handbook."

"It's all in English."

"I know," said Buttler as he headed for the door, "but it doesn't make any difference."

The instructor's first instinct was to flunk the football player. But recognizing his obligation to the athletic department he finally decided to let Fred withdraw to avoid the embarrassment of an F. Courtesies like these in the classroom paid off on the field. Although the defensive star couldn't read the playbook he could make out the diagrams. And after going through a few drills Buttler remembered everything. There was nothing stupid about this slight player who proved fearless in tight situations, often doing the work of two men. Quick, agile, tireless—Fred Buttler was one of the key reasons El Camino went 8-1-1 in 1972 and won the Metro conference co-championship.

After Buttler and his teammates placed second in the conference in 1973 the cornerback began talking with coaches at Cal State L.A. and Cal State Long Beach. Once again the recruiters spoke of the many ways that their schools might help him into the pros. Financial aid was automatic. All Fred had to do was find a way to handle the long application forms required by both institutions.

In desperation he turned to his advisor, Carl Mersola, who completed a stack of admission and federal grant documents. The coach nearly ended up with writer's cramp as he devoted two days to getting all the answers down. After reading through the papers with Fred, the El Camino instructor addressed them to the four-year institutions. Finally it was Buttler's turn to make his first and last contribution to the admissions process: sealing the envelopes and licking the stamps.

The applicant didn't have to wait long for a reply. First Cal State Long Beach told Fred he could have a financial aid package totaling $3,700 to help follow his late brother's footsteps. This deal seemed preferable to the $2,200 offered by Cal State L.A. But his enthusiasm for Long Beach waned when he learned that most of their money was only being loaned. At L.A. State he had to pay back $1,200 out of $2,200. Long Beach wanted $2,800 of the $3,700 returned. There was one other big incentive at L.A. State: The coaches promised to find a class that would help him with his reading problem.

Unfortunately when the 20-year-old football player arrived at the locker room in the fall of 1974 no one seemed to know anything about remedial reading. Fred began checking around with the coaches and learned that his new school didn't teach the basics. Students were expected to have learned the three R's before they reached the junior transfer level. The kinds of special education Fred had been taking since Warren Lane didn't exist here. There was no course for non-readers at L.A. State.

While Buttler was trying to figure out his next move, the coaches began asking one another how this newcomer managed to finish El Camino with a B-plus average during his final semester. Handicapped students made some remarkable achievements. But it seemed improbable that Fred, who freely admitted that he couldn't read the names off the school's trophy case, could have slipped through junior college so easily.

Although the newcomer transferred to this four-year school without having taken any of the natural science, social science, humanities or basic subjects required to graduate from a state university, he was urged to stick with physical education courses.

"I went in to see my new advisor, the defensive football coach," Fred recalls, "and told him I couldn't fill out the schedule card. I was a little worried that he would be upset with me but there

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wasn't any problem. He just wrote down the names of all my courses and then I copied them onto the form. He couldn't have been nicer to me."

Thanks to an athletic grant-in-aid Buttler was able to waive his $65.50 tuition the first quarter. But when his initial Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and National Direct Student Loan failed to arrive on time from Washington, one of the coaches reached into his pocket three times to loan the player a total of $180 toward his rent money. Because of his precarious financial situation Fred was only able to repay $90. The coach elected to write off this bad loan, which he made despite the potential risk of running afoul of NCAA rules.

Even though Fred was not a great credit risk, no one in the athletic department was dunning him. Everyone knew that L.A. State was getting their money's worth out on the field. Thanks to his speed and dependability Buttler played as much as anyone. The new boy from Inglewood may not have been making headlines every week. But his steady, determined performance was noted by competitors throughout Southern California.

"If that guy were a little bigger," one coach confided after losing to the L.A. State Diablos, "he'd be drafted for sure."

As the L.A. State Diablos finished up their 1974 season 5-4-1, some of Buttler's instructors began raising questions about his academic problems. One was Dr. Al Marino, associate chairman of the school's physical education department and assistant athletic director. Buttler let him in on the bad news one day following a gymnastics theory class.

"I can't take your test," explained the student.

"Don't worry about it," replied the professor, "I'll reschedule it for a more convenient time."

"I don't think you understand. I can't read."

"Why are you here?"

"Because it's an opportunity to play football."

Dr. Marino's concern was shared by L.A. State Athletic Director John Hermann: "I was surprised he got out of high school," Hermann said. "But when you inherit a kid like this do you throw him out or help him to some degree? At some point along the line he's got to read. A lot of society is based on reading. For instance in your profession [journalism] you have to read and write to excel. So we decided to help Fred, to do as much as we could for him.

"Instead of shutting him out of classes instructors extended him the courtesy of oral exams. We did as much as we could for him. After all, football was important to Fred. Through football he had a chance to advance and get confidence. It gave him a base."

This academic philosophy helped Buttler enroll in courses like handball, basketball, track, rugby, wrestling, football, golf, tennis and diving in the winter and spring quarters of 1975. But when he asked for help with his reading the coaches simply scribbled down the name of a special program back in Inglewood. Buttler had tried it unsuccessfully several years earlier.

By the end of his first year at L.A. State Fred had become one of the most successful non-readers in California collegiate history

"No one there could figure out why I hadn't learned to read," says Fred. "I don't know myself. Maybe it was because I never had to. I think some of the coaches were probably happy I couldn't read because that meant I wouldn't waste time on schoolwork since that way I could concentrate on playing for them."

By the end of his first year at L.A. State Fred had become one of the most successful non-readers in California collegiate history. The only dents in his C-plus average were failing grades in selected topics of physical education and philosophy. The latter was taught by a sports-minded professor traditionally generous with athletes. Unfortunately this friend of the athletic program could find no way to squeak Buttler through. Fortunately his A's in sports classes more than offset these two deficient performances.

The only real problem with Fred's first year was that he finished one unit shy of the 36 required to remain eligible for football. Luckily the coaches who welcomed him back to training in late summer 1975 weren't aware of this. Toward the end of the season Buttler began looking up into the bleachers for the pro scouts. He hadn't heard from them yet but was sure they were there somewhere. It was only a matter of days until someone would contact him. Fred realized there would be tough competition against the best collegiate players in the nation. But he wasn't worried. All he wanted to know was where to report the next summer

When the last game ended without word from the NFL or the AFL, the defensive player began asking his coaches for advice. But the same men who had engaged him in long fatherly chats all seemed to be in conference, on the phone or off interviewing next year's crop. Fred Buttler had moved into the past tense.

Rudderless, without friendly curriculum advisors, generous teachers and scholarship money, Fred Buttler flunked out of L.A. State in the winter of '76. And as he began hunting for work the former student discovered not everyone at the university had forgotten him. Back in Inglewood he received a series of letters in care of his mother from the L.A. State financial aid office. "Dear Borrower," they began, "Please be advised that California State University at Los Angeles, will ask the State Controller to offset the amount you owe to the campus ($1,236) under the National Defense/Direct Student Loan Program against any money the State may owe you, including any refund of State income taxes. . . . "

Over the next two years Fred Buttler went on a seemingly endless job search. His job difficulties were a continuing source of friction with his stormy father. When the son approached Sam Buttler for a loan there was no understanding or forgiveness. In August 1977, the 58-year-old mechanic went into the hospital for open-heart surgery. After the operation, Fred moved into his father's apartment to help him convalesce. Discussions quickly turned to arguments that ended when Fred rushed out as Sam screamed death threats through the screen door. Last spring the senior Buttler mellowed a bit and apologized for his ill-tempered tirades. But on the evening of June 30 Sam Buttler apparently decided, in the midst of a furious argument, to make good on his formerly empty threats. He grabbed a shotgun and moved toward his son, who had retreated to a bedroom. Fred picked up a pistol and shouted out a warning. Seconds later the pistol fired accidentally, fatally wounding the older man. Minutes later, Fred was on the phone in tears to the police. On July 5 he was charged with murder; the charges were dismissed at a preliminary hearing eight days later. The judge declared the shooting an accident.

After the trial Fred moved back in with his mother. A neighbor found him a janitor's job at a metal-working factory near the Los Angeles airport. Soon Fred moved up a notch to a job in which he makes hinges. Over at the Inglewood courts, Public Defender Loren Mandel tucked his Fred Buttler records into a storage file. "He was a remarkable client," the attorney said. "The only man I've ever had who broke down and cried when the judge dropped charges against him. Fred wasn't the least bit relieved. He just sat next to me at the table weeping saying, 'It doesn't bring my daddy back.' By the way, I understand he used to be a terrific football player. Do you know anything about that?" ●

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Courtesy of the Florida legislature, all Disney World is divided into three autonomous municipalities. And if Walt's successors have his way, Disneylaw will soon repeat itself in the state of California

Mickey Say, Mickey Do

by Becky O'Malley

In the beginning, Walt created Disneyland. And the simulation of life he created there was, for the millions who experienced it, more pleasing than real life—cleaner, cozier, safer and slightly smaller. And because Walt found that simulated was good (not to mention profitable), before he was laid to rest he did it again.

The second time, he recreated his quintessential artificial environment in the middle of Florida, and he called it Walt Disney World. The Magic Kingdom is even better than Disneyland. It offers a cleaned-up, scaled-down world tour cum Coney Island, a funkless Utopia with glimpses into the past and future in painless, plastic doses that come close to being educational. It's easy enough to poke fun at the resulting fantasy—"King Arthur and the Round Table, presented by Borden"—but the formula works, and has attracted millions of tourists each year since it opened in 1971.

Unlike Disneyland, Walt Disney World is a "destination resort," which means, in Disneyspeak, that each and every vacation dollar a tourist brings to Florida can be spent right on Disney property. There are three giant hotel complexes, the Contemporary, the Polynesian and the Golf resort, a condominium-style rental village, a golf club, a campground, two large lakes with motorboat rentals, a gas station, a shopping center, night clubs, horseback riding—even an office plaza and a bank.

And it's all "themed"—a Disneyword I first heard from the PR man who was showing me around Fort Wilderness Campground. He pointed to a tree stump.

"See, even the hookups are themed."

I looked again. Sure enough, the electrical and plumbing connections that make it possible for motor-homers to use their TVs and toilets out there in the woods are covered with realistic fiberglass bark.

The art of disguising buildings and objects with whimsical fiberglass or plastic shells was perfected at the casting shop located in the nether regions of Walt Disney World. Thus, the Polynesian Hotel (simulated Tahiti) may appear to be constructed of bamboo and thatch, but in fact was actually assembled from modules built by U.S. Steel in a factory on the Disney property.

The ultimate simulation, however, is the one that goes beyond anything the Disney Imagineers could ever dream up for the Magic Kingdom: at Disney World, they even have a simulated municipal government.

Disney's 43-square-mile Florida property (as big as San Francisco, twice the size of Manhattan, 275 times as big as Vatican City) is a feudal domain that has been legally themed, courtesy of the Florida Legislature, to present a clever imitation of a Democratic government. Or, to be precise, three governments.

The Disney corporation and its friends and business associates are able to control this large piece of Florida at their pleasure by means of an amazing legal construct called the Reedy Creek Improvement District (RCID). Property, not people, votes in Reedy Creek, which has exactly the same boundaries as Walt Disney World. The five supervisors who run the district are elected by the peculiar principle of one acre, one vote. And Disney owns all but 25 of the acres and casts virtually all votes on Election Day.

California lawyer Harold Berliner, who uncovered many of the details of the Reedy Creek charter while fighting to halt development of a proposed Disney resort in the California Sierras, calls RCID "one of the most powerful governmental units this side of the Iron Curtain."

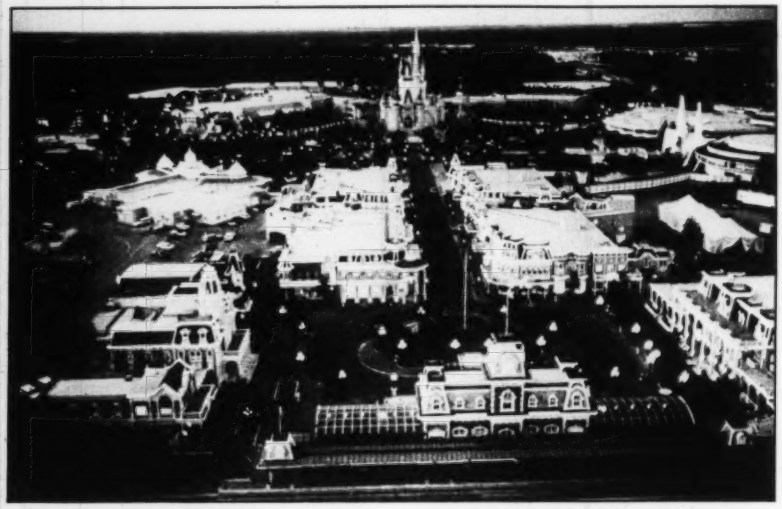
The supervisors of Reedy Creek may, among other things: build roads, operate an airport; enact and enforce building codes; construct canals and lakes; seize land; even generate power by nuclear fission. What's more the RCID can sell municipal bonds to finance all this, and only has to pay a tax-exempt 5 percent interest on the money.

It is all perfectly legal. RCID was created in 1967 by an enthusiastic Florida Legislature, which firmly believed that Disney is synonymous with instant prosperity. Afraid that the company might take its business elsewhere if they didn't act soon, the legislature hustled the Reedy Creek charter through in about two weeks. Among other things, the enabling legislation gives Reedy Creek such carte blanche regulations as:

- An exemption from virtually all zoning laws, land-use laws and building regulations of the state or county
- The power of eminent domain "for any of the projects of the district" inside and outside its borders, and control over a wide assortment of functions usually subject to state law—such as roads and transportation, waste disposal, sanitation, water and sewage systems
- A budget and financial set-up that are not subject to state control or regulation, or to state laws regulating the levying of taxes
- Enforcement of a law making it a misdemeanor to violate any of the rules adopted under the Reedy Creek Act, or even to *talk* about violating some of them ("to advocate, propose, suggest, use or exhibit a map, or survey or plan of subdivision or development of land except in conformity with this Act and the rules and regulations of the Board of Supervisors")
- An abridgement or elimination of all the usual rules in governmental

Becky O'Malley, who lives in Berkeley, California, specializes in legal, environmental and political issues.

Photograph by Bud Lee



codes that ensure the public's right to monitor the activities of government (the district can, for example, act to drain a swamp on only two weeks notice and objections must be filed within ten days).

• Giving supervisors the power to make contracts to sell the services of the district without any public notice or hearing.

Since the charter specifies that all of the supervisors must be freeholders in the district, chosen nominees are deeded five acres of land by Disney.

"There's nothing that says they've got to turn that land over to the landowner immediately when they leave the board," District General Manager Tom Moses said recently. "But I think it's probably a custom that they do." (Moses seldom refers to the Disney corporation by name—he always speaks, in feudal language—of The Landowner.) This picturesque local tradition is no doubt reinforced by the fact that the property deeds give Walt Disney World Corporation (Worldco) the option to repurchase the property when the supervisor wants to sell it.

One other fact helps bolster the preservation of Disneylaw: the supervisors are often business associates of the Disney company. President of the Board of Supervisors Tom DeWolf, for example, is a partner in a law firm that handles a great deal of the district's legal business.

While all of this role switching might inspire conflict-of-interest charges elsewhere, by law, the supervisors are permitted to vote on contracts between the district and their own companies.

Tom Moses himself used to be president of the Board of Supervisors as well as its chief paid employee, until the Florida Legislature made it illegal for a person to be employed and elected by the same governmental unit. "I don't know why they did that," Moses said, "but at the time I had the choice of giving up one of the two positions, so I gave up the nonpaying one."

Disney executives even used to be employed as supervisors. Walt Disney Productions President Donn Tatum (now chairman of the board) was on the first Board of Directors in 1967. "Back in our early days we did use company employees for the Board of Supervisors," said Moses. "There was never any indication that that constituted a problem, but as our activities developed it became very clear that if you wanted to let everyone know that it wasn't a company-run government, the best thing to do was to go on the outside and utilize people who understood what the overall development was."

While Moses bridles at the suggestion that any of this might be improper, he is aware that there are some people who might find RCID's intimacy with the Walt Disney World Corporation a little bizarre. "I'm the first to admit it's not your run-of-the-mill type government," he said as he handed over various RCID records for inspection. But, Moses added, "You won't find anything there any different from any city in the U.S." Except, perhaps, that most municipal minutes don't show expenditures like "a high-voltage load center for Fantasyland basement, at a cost of $26,363," and that most municipalities are not run for the benefit of one corporation.

By law, supervisors are permitted to vote on contracts between the district and their own companies

Merrill Goodall, a California expert on water policy, has a succinct opinion of the relationship between Disney and the district. "It's a public agency which serves as a facade for a private purpose," he said. Thanks to a generous Florida Legislature, RCID can sell municipal bonds to finance public works that mainly benefit Walt Disney World—roads, canals, parking lots, etc. And it only has to pay investors a low 5 percent for their capital, since income from municipal bonds isn't taxable under federal law. This tax break is usually aimed at helping real governments finance projects that benefit the real citizens of real cities. But in Reedy Creek Kingdom, only Disney wins.

The propriety of a private corporation taking advantage of financing benefits designed to be used to aid real public entities is of course debatable. In some states, courts have upheld public financing for such things as the construction of stadiums—where all the profits from ball games go into private pockets—on the grounds that stimulating employment is a valid public purpose.

Dick Nunis, vice-president of Walt Disney Productions, who is in charge of operations at Walt Disney World and Disneyland, recently explained the reason for the legal arrangements. Like many Disney employees, he still seems to find it hard to believe, even after 12 years, that Walt is really gone. He described the rationale behind Reedy Creek in terms of the founder's ideals, and he spoke of Disney in the present tense.

"Walt is a great believer in people, and he believes strongly that you need the support of the people in the community," Nunis said. "He didn't want to burden the local taxpayer with things he knew he would have to have in order to do the things he wanted to do."

The charter of the district, however, does not read like it was inspired by a great believer in people. In fact, it reads like it was written by someone who wanted to make absolutely sure that the people of the state of Florida and the taxpayers of Orange County had absolutely nothing to say about the way Walt Disney's world was run.

In Bob Thomas' "authorized" biography of the founder, there is an anecdote that reveals this side of Disney's nature. According to Thomas, Walt and his president, Donn Tatum, were discussing plans for the Florida property. Tatum reportedly observed that what Disney seemed to want was "an experimental absolute monarchy."

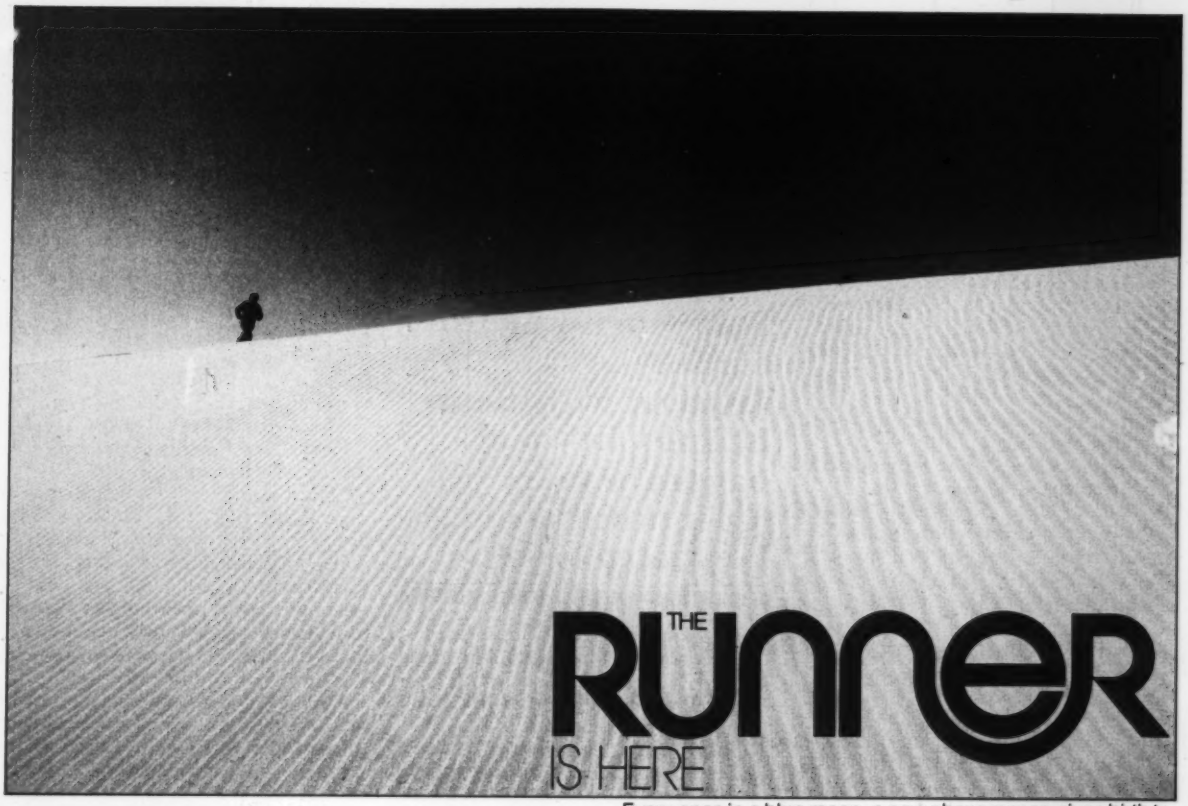
"Walt raised an eyebrow and asked puckishly, 'Can I have one?'"

"No," Tatum replied.

But, in the end, what Walt wanted he nearly got.

Shortly after the plan was hatched, company lawyers advised Disney that a few of the powers of government he wanted for Disney World were more

Photograph by Fred Ward/Black Star



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Profit Sharing

A few random samples of how the Walt Disney Corporation and its Florida subsidiaries deal with the governments Disney controls:

•Reedy Creek Municipal Improvement District (RCID) made a final payment of $55,716.31 to Walt Disney Worldco for partial landscaping of Preview Boulevard, the entrance to the leased hotel plaza.

•Worldco and the city of Bay Lake reached an agreement to hire the corporate accountants to perform "certain financial, administrative and other related services" for the city—such as preparing budgets, maintaining financial records and bank accounts.

•Construction of a canal by Disney's Buena Vista Land Company as an adjunct to a canal on its own property was approved. RCID is to reimburse the company for costs.

•One complex transaction shows clearly how public and private funding are used interchangeably to serve Disney's needs. Lake Buena Vista Communities, Inc., the Disney subsidiary that is developing the Walt Disney World village shopping center a few miles away from the amusement park, built a roadway on its own property to serve the center. The Reedy Creek Improvement District supervisors decided "that it would be in the best interest of the district to acquire said roadway," so the board agreed to accept the donation of the right-of-way and to reimburse the developer about $500,000 for road-building costs from special assessment bonds. This meant, of course, that the district agreed to take on the cost of maintaining the shopping center's road. The district then discovered that it couldn't sell the special assessment bonds on terms favorable to the district. To pay off the money it owed the Disney development company, the supervisors made a deal with Worldco to borrow the $500,000 at 6 percent interest, which would be paid back in two years from regular district funds. —*B.O'M.*

properly exercised by cities than by special taxing districts that limited the franchise to property owners. So Walt agreed to have a couple of municipalities on the property as well, for special duties such as issuing liquor licenses and taxi permits. And along with the Reedy Creek district, the Florida Legislature created a couple of cities called Bay Lake and Lake Buena Vista to help him out.

Tom Moses explained the theory in practical terms: "It is a very big part of our responsibility to control the taxicabs that come on the property to carry the guests of The Landowner," Moses said. It isn't hard to be sure that city voters can cope with this awesome responsibility because "The Landowner determines who they will rent space to."

The city of Bay Lake takes in, roughly, the territory occupied by the amusement park, the campground and the Disney hotels. The city of Lake Buena Vista is principally comprised of the Disney condominiums, a shopping center, an office building and the area leased to outside hotels and corporations. Tom Moses is also the city manager of Lake Buena Vista; his office is in the brand new Walt Disney office plaza.

"Walt didn't want to burden the local taxpayer with things he knew he would have to have in order to do the things he wanted to do"

On a remote, inaccessible lot within each city limit is a little cluster of trailers, which house, for the duration of their service to the corporation, the lucky handful of Disney employees who have been chosen to be "citizens" of Bay Lake and Lake Buena Vista for a few years. Lake Buena Vista had 36 voters at the last election, Bay Lake about the same. They go through all the motions of electing city councils, according to the laws of the state of Florida, complete with voting machines. Each Election Day, a few individuals from among their number have their names placed on the ballot by petition and usually run unopposed. Once on the council, they pass the laws governing the conduct of visitors, employees, lessees and tradespeople in Walt Disney World.

For the first few years after the cities were chartered, important Disney friends and functionaries served on the council, claiming Florida residence to do so. In Bay Lake, for example, the first council included Roy Hawkins, a real-estate specialist who assembled much of the property for the development; Philip N. Smith, Walt Disney World Corporation's legal vice-president; Donn Tatum, now Disney Productions chairman of the board; and E. Cardon Walker, now president. In those early years, the minutes of almost every Bay Lake City Council meeting included a letter from Donn Tatum explaining that he was unable to attend because he was detained in California.

Now, however, council members are more likely to be simpler folk like Imogene Land, who works as a housekeeper at the Disney condominum-style hotel. I talked to Land over a glass of lemonade in her one-room trailer home on Little Lake Bryan, which is separated from the main Disney World acreage by Interstate 4. She told me she'd been asked to live in the trailer about four years ago by a corporate representative. She was happy to since it was close to her job and the rent was much less than she'd have to pay elsewhere.

Two years ago she was asked to run for council. She was glad to oblige, she said, because she knew there would be "no real major decisions to make." She explained that, as she understood it, "We don't set up taxes here, because we're on Walt Disney property."

I asked her how she decided how to vote at council meetings.

"There's quite a few smart ones at council," she said. "Me, I'm not a smart one. The city manager, Mr. Tom Moses, is the guideline on our voting. He's a smart one."

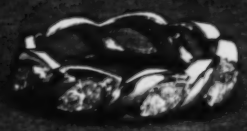
Another smart one who goes to all the council meetings is Pedro Saez, attorney for both cities who happens to be one of Worldco's staff counselors as well.

The only controversial issue to come before either council in ten years was the paving of roads to the trailers. A few years ago, council members complained about bumps and holes; city staff responded that the roads couldn't be paved because county funds weren't available for the job. Apparently none of the smart ones bothered to inform the council members that if they wanted any roads in their cities paved, they had the legal power to assess a tax on The Landowner's property and order the job done. (The council members finally got their road this year when funds were made available.)

Walt Disney executives make little effort to hide the intimate relationship that exists between their corporation, its subsidiaries and the three governments. Attorney Saez has his office in the Walt Disney World Corporation administrative building, and minutes of the meetings of all three governments are filed there. The Reedy Creek Improvement District is listed in the telephone book under "Walt Disney World." It also appears (in the category of "Utilities") on the Form 10-K the Disney Corporation is required to file with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a "governmental unit of the State of Florida." (It is undoubtedly the only governmental unit in the country that is listed in the assets category on a corporate financial statement.)

Though the charter permits RCID to operate all utilities, the district currently provides only the water control and sewage facilities that serve Walt Disney World. Electricity, gas, air conditioning and fuel oil lines on the Florida property are supplied by Reedy Creek Utilities

Last week, I watched him arrive. And felt myself becoming a Dad.
Well, this is my way of celebrating that with you, Mom.



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Traditionally, a full or half circle of diamonds...given on an anniversary or at the birth of a child.
Ask your jeweler for the "Eternity Ring" booklet. DeBeers. A diamond is forever.

Co., Inc. (RCUC), a Disney subsidiary also listed in the utilities category. RCID sold most of the assets of these systems to the Disney-owned utility company in 1971 for $12,050,000.

The records of all three governments are loaded with examples of similar transactions with various Disney enterprises, both large and small (see sidebar).

Just how much all this fund-shuffling has benefited Disney's financial picture since the Florida Legislature first set up the themed governments can't be assessed without access to all records of the corporation's cash flow, depreciation schedules and tax returns for the last ten years. Like most corporations of its size, Disney maintains a squad of eager tax lawyers, who attempt to utilize perfectly legal loopholes in the federal tax laws. One classic form of exploitation of tax law is shifting money within a big corporation from subsidiary to subsidiary. For Disney, controlling three governments could serve as another kind of deep pocket into which money could be transferred.

But the rewards that The Landowner reaps from having three themed governments to play around with aren't just monetary. The Bay Lake City Council passed a series of ordinances—aimed at giving Worldco total control over errant visitors to the Magic Kingdom—that would chill the heart of any civil libertarian. (But of course there's no Bay Lake ACLU. . . .)

Ordinance number 15 allows any Kingdom employee to detain a person "causing a public disturbance"—which could include sneaking in without paying—without incurring liability for false arrest. Number 24 permits Disney staff to use force to throw anyone off the property who refuses to leave when asked, again without risking a false arrest charge or suit. There was once an ordinance barring airplanes from flying too close to Disney property without permission, but it was later repealed.

Government employees perform many duties for The Landowner on Disney property. For example, Bay Lake Ordinance Number 19 authorizes the City Director of Public Safety to treat private streets as public roads for traffic law-enforcement purposes. This means that police officers, with the power of arrest, can enforce parking-lot rules and speed limits for Disney.

The Landowner's special relationship with government in the Kingdom means that the tenant hotels and concessionaires must deal with Disney like feudal tenants in an absolute monarchy. The city governments, for example, control who gets liquor licenses, and their charters exempt them from the Florida law limiting the number of liquor licenses that can be given to one person. When the Bay Lake City Council recently voted to ask the Florida Legislature for additional unspecified exemptions from the state liquor law, the Walt Disney World Corporation legal department was asked to prepare a bill on the subject to submit to the legislature on behalf of the city.

To parry criticism of its blanket exemption from all Florida environmental laws, Walt Disney World maintains its own Department of Environmental Relations, but without mandatory outside government inspection, there's no real way to judge how well they're doing. Fred Harden, director of the department, is an intelligent and seemingly sincere fellow, but whether he has veto power over ecologically unsound projects is questionable. For example, Disney World executives enthusiastically exhibit a project that is growing eucalyptus trees in treated sewage wastes. Some of them claim with pride that Disney introduced the eucalyptus to Florida from California for the first time. But in California the eucalyptus tree, which was originally introduced from Australia, has spread unchecked to the point where it is now regarded as a noxious weed that crowds out more desirable native plants.

Disney executives make little effort to hide the intimate relationship that exists between the corporation, its subsidiaries and the three governments

Many Disney people that I met manifested a corporate inability to tell the difference between clean and environmentally sound. Disney Vice-President Dick Nunis explained that one of Walt's major goals at Disney World was to show that "you could take virgin land and develop it and *enhance* the environment, not take away from it. I think the classic example," he said, "is the lagoon there that we built. That lagoon was a very large swamp, and I think we've really enhanced the environment, because that's a beautiful lagoon. It adds pleasure for a lot of people, and there's still a lot of trees you can see around."

It seemed fruitless to explain to him that a lot of people would rather see a real swamp with real alligators than an artificial lagoon with motorboats and light-up electric simulated seals.

But even if everything inside the borders of Disney's Florida domain is clean, beautiful and environmentally sound, as company press releases claim, there is a larger problem raised by its exemption from Florida environmental law: its impact on the region around it. Disney has plans for additional development, which the company hopes will almost double attendance—from 13 million to 20 million people a year.

Florida Attorney General Robert Shevin ruled last year that the project does not have to undergo the state's much praised Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review process, which is designed to help county planners prepare for the added governmental responsibilities that development inevitably brings with it.

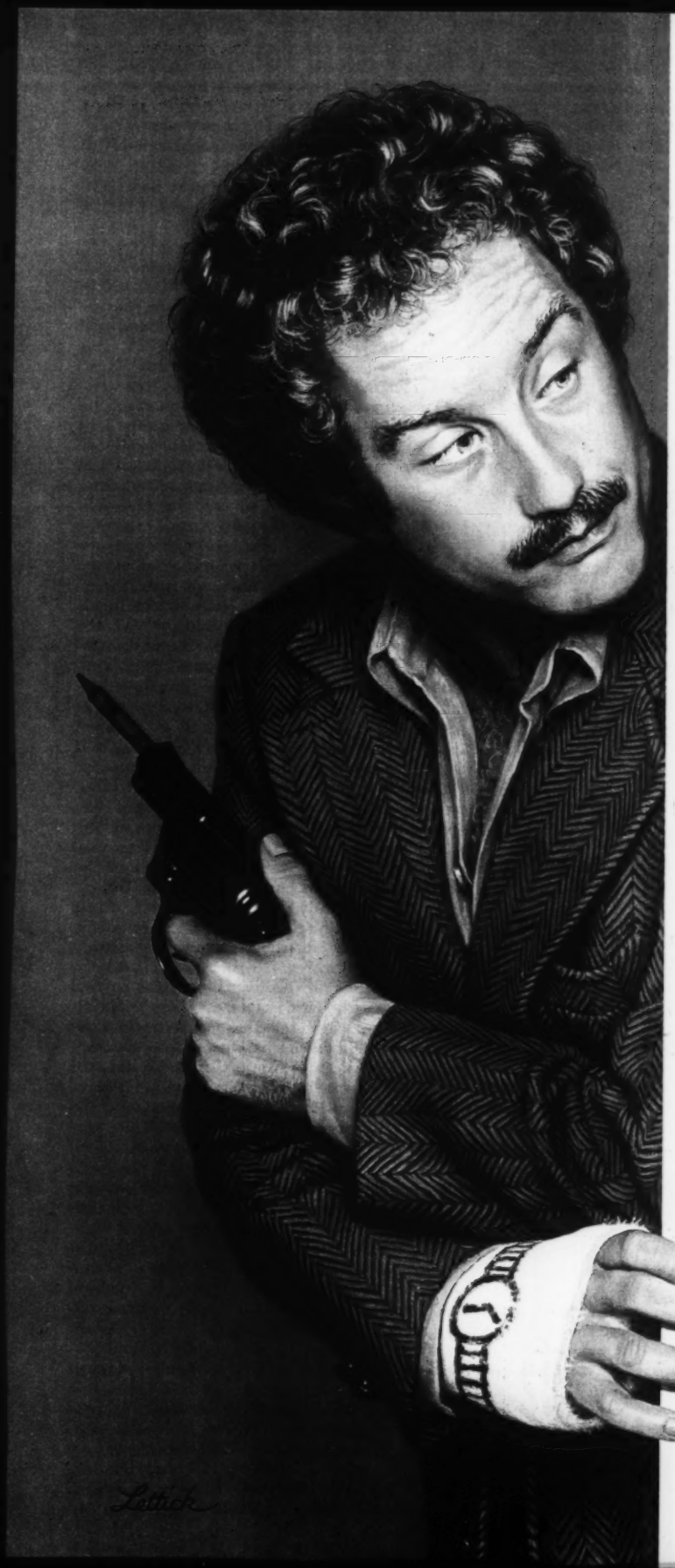
"It is more difficult for us to react" without the DRI process, Orange County Assistant Planning Director James Sellen said when he learned of Shevin's ruling. "I would like to know what they (Disney officials) are doing."

In the past, local officials have often been the last to hear about Disney's plans. In 1972, when President E. Cardon Walker announced that his company intended to build a development for 20,000 residents on 700 acres of the Disney World property, then-County Commissioner Paul Pickett read about the Walker announcement in the papers, and was furious. "That was the last straw," he said. "I could just see millions of county dollars going out in services."

Pickett and other county officials feared that the cost of extending roads, sewer lines and other services to residents so far from the population center in Orlando—"22 miles out in the boondocks"—would be prohibitive. "We decided that before we would permit that, we would file suit and challenge the whole Reedy Creek law as being unconstitutional," Pickett recalled. "So they dropped it."

Disney executives have always enjoyed quiet maneuvers. Few outsiders—least of all the county commissioners—had any idea what was in the works until the original land purchase was a *fait accompli*. The announcement, when it finally came, had a devastating effect on Orlando and the four counties around it. The area developed the economic bends, going through a boom-and-bust cycle from which it is just now recovering.

Sudden growth created two major problems for local taxpayers. With assessments on all property boosted by speculators' paper profits, taxes went up for everybody, even for people who didn't want to sell out. And Disney World proved to be a population magnet that virtually doubled the rate of growth in Orange County. Providing services for all those new citizens caused government costs to soar beyond the



Richard Dreyfuss as
Moses Wine
Private Detective

...so go figure

the Big Fix

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OFELIA MEDINA
FRITZ WEAVER

"THE BIG FIX"

Screenplay by ROGER L. SIMON
Based on His Novel
Directed by JEREMY PAUL KAGAN
Produced by CARL BORACK
and RICHARD DREYFUSS
Music by BILL CONTI
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revenue the development brought in. By 1974, Walt Disney World had attracted about 60,000 additional people to the area, yet it provided only 11,000 new jobs, mostly for low-paid service workers subject to seasonal unemployment.

"For the commercial property owner, growth has made money," says Paul Pickett, who admits that he himself made $100,000 on a piece of income property he owned Before Disney. "But for the average citizen who works for a salary—the only thing Disney World brought him was higher taxes, traffic congestion and a lot of relatives he hadn't seen in years."

Pickett estimates that the park cost the surrounding counties $12–$14 million before it even opened, in roads, increased police protection and the cost of taking care of the unemployed job seekers and runaways it attracted. Now, he says, the counties just about break even between the taxes Disney World brings in and the service needs it generates. But the start-up costs are lost forever.

When Dick Nunis told me that at Disney World, Walt "wanted to show how a company, through the free-enterprise system, could take virgin land and develop it without government subsidy," I pointed out that tax breaks for bond financing of the Reedy Creek district were a form of indirect subsidy. "What I was talking about was matching funds," he said. "Today, it's ironic, there are so many ways you can go and get government subsidies, matching federal funds and that sort of thing, and Walt didn't want to go that route," he said.

I told him I had just come back from touring the solar energy facility at the Reedy Creek Utilities Company plant, paid for in part by an ERDA grant from the federal government. He paused for a minute, and then said, "Yeah, and if we had it to do over again we wouldn't do it, probably." Then he changed the subject.

Later I discovered that there had also been an EPA grant designed by a Disney subsidiary and rubber-stamped by the supervisors, for a scheme to generate methane from the water hyacinths that clog the Reedy Creek canals. Also, the city of Lake Buena Vista had accepted and used federal revenue-sharing funds.

The extra traffic generated by Walt Disney World turned out to be the big ticket item in cost to the taxpayers. Soon after the park opened, legendary traffic jams extending over four counties started to form on Interstate 4. A crash program to expand the road to six lanes alleviated the problem at a cost of more than $2 million.

A dispute developed between Disney executives and county commissioners over the use of county road funds to improve State Road 535 to serve the Disney World employee entrance. County officials resisted Disney's demands, insisting that planned road improvements elsewhere in the county had priority.

Paul Pickett complained about the high-handed way in which Disney people asked for what they wanted. "When I told them that the road they wanted to use for employee access was inadequate, they said, 'That's your problem.' They created problems and then wanted the county to spend road improvement dollars to fix them. . . at public expense for a money-making corporation. Everyone else who's come into Orange County [to develop property] in the last 20 years has had to pay their own way. . . but then, they're the only corporation anointed by God," he said.

Disney's Florida property is a feudal domain that has been legally themed to present a clever imitation of a democratic government

California lawyer Harold Berliner flew to Disney World last spring at his own expense to measure the impact of putting a big project in the middle of a rural area. Berliner has a personal stake in unearthing the facts, for he believes that Disney officials are now trying to stampede California officials into giving the corporation the same kind of preferred extra-legal status it enjoys in Florida.

Berliner's hometown is located on the main access route to 17,000 acres near Mount Lola and Independence Lake, which the Disney folks would like to turn into another destination resort.

It would not be the first time the corporation tried to invade California. In the late sixties, Disney announced plans to lease the state's Mineral King wilderness area from the U.S. Forest Service and turn the natural Sierra glacial valley into an Alpine resort. Mineral King was stalled by a Sierra Club lawsuit, and it looks as though that land will probably be converted into a national park.

Much of Independence Lake, however, is privately owned, and construction could begin as soon as an environmental impact report is complete, and authorities issue the necessary permit.

California opponents of the project, who have studied Florida's experience with Walt Disney World, fear that the Disney corporation will have the same kind of overwhelming impact on tiny Sierra County. There are fewer than 3,500 people in the whole county now, and the new project could put up to 25,000 people *a day* on its two-lane road.

Disney spokespeople have been putting less than subtle pressure on the Sierra County supervisors to speed up the environmental impact report. On March 8, the corporation announced that it was "suspending" its development plans because of bureaucratic foot-dragging and environmental red tape. Project Manager Wing Chao issued a dramatic press release, which blamed the suspension on "the irresponsible proliferation of delays, the never-ending requests for more and more irrelevant information and studies, the bureaucratic sidetrackings and meanderings into unreasonable alternatives and the ever-increasing attendant costs to the applicant [Disney]."

Harold Berliner, for one, sees the withdrawal as the opening salvo in a campaign for Disney to get special permission to operate outside California law, as it does in Florida. "With the Reedy Creek experience in mind, it becomes easier to understand Disney's impatience with ordinary government it doesn't own or control" he says. "It has been so used to having its own way in Florida in every conceivable field, and immediately, that the slightest exercise of regulation drives its officials wild."

Bill Press, director of the state of California's Office of Planning and Research, thinks Disney's claims of mistreatment were exaggerated. "The process has barely begun with Disney, and already they're crying wolf," Press said. "Their charge of delay is totally unfounded—they're really just getting underway."

Disney executives have had several meetings with state and local officials since then, but they continue to issue statements demanding some unspecified "show of support" from California's government. Dick Nunis told the Sierra County Planning Commission that the project will be off for good if the corporation doesn't get what it wants.

No administrator has the power to truncate California's Environmental Quality Act reporting process, though the process has been radically streamlined by the legislature within the last year. Disney is the first permit applicant to be allowed to combine the federal and state environmental reports under the revised regulations. (The U.S. Forest Service, which does the federal portion of the joint environmental impact study, has already assured Disney in private that they are behind the project.) A special task force to aid the Disney permit application has been set up.

Pro-development interests, including big labor, have been lobbying California Governor Jerry Brown to give in to Dis-

ney. In an election year, he's vulnerable to being tagged anti-business. Disney Vice-President for Finance Michael Bagnall said he thought the project would have a better chance if Republican Attorney General Evelle Younger beat Brown in the fall. "That Brown is a conservationist," he charged. (Younger's record on environmental questions is fairly liberal, nevertheless.)

For Walt Disney Productions, Inc., the stakes at Independence Lake are high. Recreation—Disneyland and Disney World—now accounts for well over half of the company's earnings. Disney's investment in Florida alone is over $700 million, and attendance at both parks appears to have stabilized. A proposed Tokyo Disneyland is on hold because of trouble with the Japanese companies that were supposed to be partners in the venture.

Disney's stock has had some dramatic swings in price since Disney World opened. Post Disney World, in 1973, it hit 123. In 1974, during the gasoline crisis, it went down to 16⅝, and it's now up to about 40. A Beverly Hills stock analyst who specializes in Disney told me he's not recommending it to his clients now because the price has been almost 14 times earnings, too high in today's market. *Forbes* magazine predicted in 1975 that if all three new projects came on stream as projected—Tokyo in 1978, California in 1979, Florida in 1980—they would be "a collective cure for Disney's sagging return on investment, down from a spectacular 27.4 percent in 1965 to 9.5 percent in 1974." In 1978, none of the projects looks close to being realized.

Unless one of them gets off the ground soon, investors' confidence may be further shaken. An environmentalists' constitutional challenge to the Florida legal set-up or a negative environmental report to the Sierra County supervisors could be a serious blow to the company.

But for Harold Berliner, what is at stake now is more important than Disney's profit picture. "What I saw in Florida," he said, "convinced me that it is Disney's ideas about government that are the real issue facing California. What is at stake here is whether or not we can maintain the rule of law in small California counties faced with a huge corporation. If Disney is able to intimidate the state of California and Sierra County into ignoring the legally established procedures, Disney will become the effective government of Sierra County."

Former Orange County Commissioner Pickett had some advice for his California counterparts. "If they back up just one inch, they're gonna get pushed 22 miles," he said. "They just have to stop it right there—those Disney people are experts at intimidation." ●

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FIVE YEAR UPDATE

THE STORIES SO FAR

SEN. WILLIAM SCOTT STILL INSISTS HE'S NOT DUMB, BUT A FIFTH-ANNIVERSARY LOOK AT OTHER *NEW TIMES* ARTICLES SHOWS THAT MUCH HAS CHANGED

SPIRO OF ARABIA

The first issue of *New Times* (10/19/73) hit the newsstands two days before Spiro Agnew handed in his resignation. The cover story asked 35 Americans whom they would like to see Nixon name as Agnew's—and, potentially, his own—successor. The responses were about evenly divided between the serious (Barry Goldwater chose Ronald Reagan) and the facetious (Dick Cavett suggested Judy Agnew). Interestingly, not a single person selected Gerald Ford, not even as a joke.

Today, Agnew is president of Pathlite, a Baltimore consulting firm that, as near as we can figure it, makes it easier for American corporations to do business with the Arabs. We tried to find out exactly what the company was all about, but—surprise!—the Greek tycoon declined to return our calls.

WHAT MAKES ABBIE RUN?

It was May 1975 when last we checked in with Abbie Hoffman ("On Board the Underground Railroad" by Ron Rosenbaum, 5/30/75). He had been in hiding for a year then, hoping to avoid trial on charges of selling cocaine—charges that under New York state's Draconian drug laws could bring him a sentence of 15 years to life.

We wondered what Abbie was doing these days, so we passed the word that we'd like a little chat with him. He called the next day.

"What can you tell us about where you're calling from?" we asked.

"What can I tell you about where I'm calling from? Well, it's a day like all days, but *you are there*!" Same old Abbie.

He has been spending his time more or less profitably, working as a short-order cook, school teacher and freelance writer—and eluding the FBI. Somewhere along the way there was a

ABBIE HOFFMAN

trip abroad: "I toured France and ripped off $5,000 worth of haute cuisine food posing as a gourmet critic," Abbie says. He has also been writing a book, a memoir he wants to call "The Unauthorized Autobiography of Abbie Hoffman." His editors at Grosset & Dunlap aren't wild about that title, we hear, but whatever it is called, the book should be out by January. A Hoffman friend who has read the book so far tells us that it's "very funny—early Philip Rothian. The maturation of a Jewish hustler in Worcester, Massachusetts." Unlike Abbie's other books, this one will not be especially political, although it will cover the birth of the Yippies and Hoffman's days as a SNCC organizer in the South.

While Abbie has been writing, his lawyers have reportedly been trying to cut a deal to get him a reduced sentence. Four and a half years of exile have inevitably taken their toll, and Hoffman is eager—under the right circumstances—to surface.

How's Abbie doing? we asked his friend.

"Great mental health. He's funny, he's up, he's optimistic—guardedly optimistic."

How are you doing? we asked Abbie.

"I got a cold. It's a damp day."

We wondered if Abbie would take a picture of himself and send it to us; one of those photo booths you see in amusement parks might do the job, we suggested. "I've gotta find a place that does that," he said. "In Uganda, that's kind of hard." But he's a resourceful man; the photos (left) made it to us just in time for this issue.

THE B-1 BOMB

The B-1 bomber—superweapon or superblunder? Why are so many billions of dollars being spent by Congress on this controversial manned bomber, we wondered, in an age of push-button nuclear warfare?

When we first posed these questions (10/17/75), there was only one B-1 prototype in existence, at Edwards Air Force Base in Marysville, California. The following year, two more B-1 aircrafts were rolled out and test-flown at Edwards. The construction of a fourth—equipped with the first airborne electronic countermeasures (ECM) system, designed to confuse enemy radar by noise-jamming—is near completion. It is expected to fly in February 1979.

BLACK STAR

On June 30, 1977, President Carter surprised the nation by recommending that no more B-1s be approved or produced, leaving open the option to continue with research and development. The Department of Defense budget for fiscal year 1979 includes a $105.5 million request for B-1 r&d, a significant slashing from previous years.

OUT OF TIME?

Keith Richards has added an "s" to his name since we last checked in with him (10/28/77). His trial on charges of possession of heroin with intent to traffic, stemming from a February 1977 airport bust, is scheduled to begin in Toronto on October 23. Conviction could result in an eight-year-to-life jail sentence, and the prosecutors have shown no inclination toward leniency.

The Stones, meanwhile, are anything but washed up. Their triannual tour was the rock event of the year, and *Some Girls*, which dominated the nation's airwaves all summer, is their biggest-selling album to date (3,000,000 and still going strong). They have been rehearsing material for their next album, due out in early 1979—if all goes well in Toronto.

Philip Burke '78

THE BERKELEY RAPIST

Stinky, the foul-smelling rapist who has claimed 62 known victims in Berkeley since June 1973, is still at large. Since Lacey Fosburgh's report (5/15/78), police have come no closer to capturing their strangely elusive prey, whose most recent attack occurred on January 14.

"We continue to receive anonymous tips," says a Berkeley police source, "but when we check them out they all turn out to be frivolous." Still, the department has kept the same (undisclosed) number of officers on the case, which has dragged on longer than *New Times* has been publishing.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

When Polaroid introduced its much heralded SX-70, we called it "the little camera that couldn't" (11/29/74). We quoted au-

PHILIP BURKE

thorities in the worlds of finance and photography who assured us that Edwin Land's latest achievement was a technological white elephant, the Edsel of the seventies.

To date, 14 million SX-70s have been sold. (Last year alone, the cameras took two billion photos.) Instant photography has cornered something like 40 percent of the photography market—double its share when our article ran.

There are now five SX-70 models. In spring 1977, the inexpensive OneStep (featuring fixed focus) was introduced; at $40, it is, according to Polaroid, "the biggest selling camera of all time." The latest technological feat is the new electronic Sonar feature, which instantly focuses the lens by reflecting an inaudible sound wave off the target. The top-of-the-line SX-70 Sonar OneStep costs $250, about twice the price of the first SX-70s we predicted would not sell.

JOHN E. BARRETT

Polaroid has inched up to number 230 on the Fortune 500, and its annual sales have shot up to more than $1 billion—one of the few companies in that category that has not merged with or acquired other corporations. Since the SX-70 hit the marketplace, Polaroid earnings have been steadily rising ($92.3 million in 1977), and every quarter has been a record quarter.

We rest our case.

SMOKE TWO JOINTS AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING

It's been four years since we reported on the potential medicinal uses of marijuana (12/13/74), and considerable progress has been made. In addition to its recognized value to glaucoma patients (it relieves the pressure of fluid building up in the eyeball), grass has been found helpful in staving off the violent attacks of nausea suffered by chemotherapy patients. Pot's potential for treating multiple sclerosis, arthritis, asthma, spinal-cord injuries and phantom pain in paraplegics (pain in limbs which no longer exist) is currently under study.

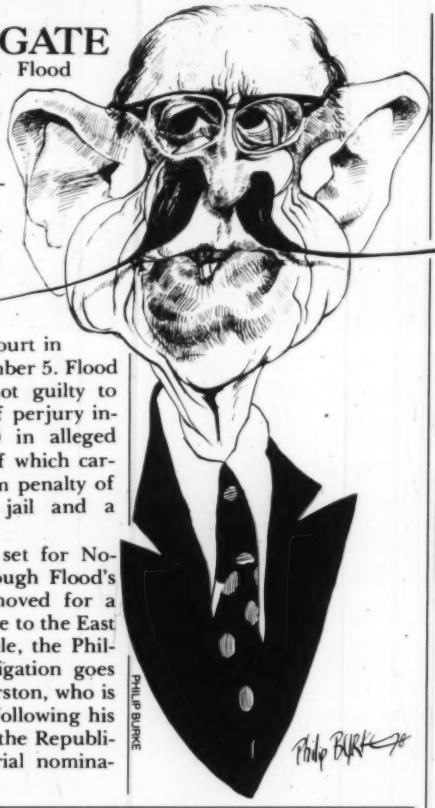
Nonetheless, progress on the societal front has been slower. In 1978, the first four states (New Mexico, Florida, Louisiana and Illinois) legalized marijuana for therapeutic use, and the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) expects at least 12 states to follow suit next year.

Theoretically, the state approaches the federal government to obtain the marijuana. Three federal agencies are involved: the Food and Drug Administration approves the state programs, the Drug Enforcement Administration polices them, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse supplies the pot from its Mississippi farm. To date, no pot has passed through these channels—it seems that marijuana is a Schedule I drug, available only for research purposes, and the federal government has shown no inclination to cut through the red tape.

FLOODGATE

Rep. Daniel J. Flood (D-Pa.), whose investigation by Philadelphia attorney Dave Marston was reported in our story on Marston's firing (2/20/78), was indicted at U.S. District Court in L.A. on September 5. Flood has pleaded not guilty to three counts of perjury involving $6,000 in alleged payoffs, each of which carries a maximum penalty of five years in jail and a $10,000 fine.

The trial is set for November 28, though Flood's attorney has moved for a change of venue to the East Coast. Meanwhile, the Philadelphia investigation goes on without Marston, who is practicing law following his losing race for the Republican gubernatorial nomination.



PHILIP BURKE

DEAR NEW TIMES: I AM NOT DUM

Whither those shining stars of yesteryear, the ten dumbest Congressmen (5/17/74)?

William Barrett (D-Pa.) died in office in early 1976, and was subsequently renominated by the voters of his district.

Harold Donohue (D-Mass.) retired in 1974, and is currently practicing law in Worcester.

Sen. Roman Hruska (R-Neb.), best known for his ringing defense of Supreme Court nominee G. Harrold Carswell ("There are a lot of mediocre judges and people and lawyers. They are entitled to a little representation") retired in 1976. He is now serving as counsel to the Omaha law firm of Kutak, Rock and Huie.

Earl "Don't confuse me with the facts" Landgrebe (R-Ind.) was defeated in 1974, and is now driving a truck in Valparaiso, Indiana. He went to Hyden, Kentucky over the 4th of July weekend to see his idol, Richard Nixon.

Joseph Maraziti (R-N.J.) was defeated in 1974, and, following a futile race for a State Assembly seat, is practicing law in Boonton, New Jersey.

John Rarick (D-La.) was defeated in 1974, and is currently practicing law in St. Francisville, Louisiana. His specialty, according to his wife, is "everything. He's just like a general practitioner in medicine, except he's a general lawyer."

Harold Runnels (D-N.M.) is running unopposed for his fifth term in Congress. He would appear to be a shoo-in.

Sen. William Scott (R-Va.), who had the dubious honor of being named the King of Dumb, reluctantly decided against suing *New Times*. "If I lost," he reasoned, "people might think the article was true." He also decided against seeking another term, and he will be vacating his throne at the end of the year.

Floyd Spence (R-S.C.), who once boasted, "I can't think of anything I myself have thought up and written that is all that important," is running for his fifth term. "There's no one thing I would want to point to as being my biggest accomplishment in Congress," he said recently on the campaign trail.

And Joseph Vigorito

(D-Pa.) is trying to regain the seat that he lost in 1976. "It's very close," says his press secretary. "They're not going to be able to tell who the winner is until the votes are counted."

THE NEW HUSTLER: STILL GROSSING

"Can he outgross *Playboy* and *Penthouse?*" Robert Ward asked in his cover story on *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt (1/9/76). Well, a lot has happened since then. Last November, with the help of Jimmy Carter's sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton, Flynt discovered Jesus. He announced a total revamping of *Hustler*'s editorial policy, promising to replace sex with sects: "It's going to be a complete new magazine.... Instead of hustling for sex, we'll be hustling for the Lord." Flynt resigned as publisher and Paul Krassner took over.

The change was less than radical. "We will no longer hang women up like pieces of meat," read the cover line of the June issue, accompanied by a picture of the body of a woman being ground up in a meat grinder. The September "Collector's Edition" featured photos of the wounds Flynt sustained when he was shot and paralyzed in Lawrenceville, Georgia last March. (His assailant remains at large.)

And, with the October issue, Flynt resumed his duties as publisher, assuring his readers that "*Hustler* will remain essentially what it has always been." In short, gross.

THE LIFE OF REILLY

"Did Peter Reilly Murder His Mother?" was the headline of Joan Barthel's first *New Times* inquiry (1/8/74) into the unusual circumstances surrounding the forced confession of the Canaan, Connecticut teenager. Reilly was ultimately convicted of matricide, but on March 25, 1976, a new trial was ordered. On November 24, 1976, the charges against Peter were dismissed.

Peter had missed his senior year of high school, but his lawyers convinced the school to re-admit him, and he graduated in June 1975. "He was never much of a student," notes Barthel, "but he did especially well his last year."

Peter was offered an unsolicited full scholarship by the University of Alabama, but he turned it down.

Today, Peter is an emergency medical technician with the Paramedical Ambulance Inc. of Torrington. He has an apartment over the garage where the ambulance is kept. He spends a few days a week with the Madow family, which took him in after his mother's murder.

Barthel's book about the affair, "A Death in Canaan," was aired on March 1 as a CBS docudrama, which was subsequently nominated for an Emmy. Marion Madow says of the show: "Peter didn't like it. It made his mother seem like something she was not—a drunken floozy. She was an alcoholic, yes, but not like that."

In November 1977, a year after his acquittal, Connecticut Superior Court Judge Maurice Sponzo ruled that Reilly could no longer be threatened with re-prosecution.

The receiver someone paid a million for.

A lot of money? You bet it is. But that's what it cost Sansui to develop the world's first super-fidelity receiver. The G-9000 pure power DC receiver.

The DC circuitry (patent pending) inside is extraordinarily sophisticated. So you get music reproduction more clean, brilliant and true than ever before.

The Sansui G-9000 is also, we believe, the world's best "human engineered" receiver. Our engineers spent months testing the full complement of controls so that they are most comfortably positioned, respond immediately to your most gentle touch, and perform with utmost accuracy.

We at Sansui are extremely proud of our million dollar achievement. And when you listen to a G-9000 at your franchised Sansui dealer, you'll know why.

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160 watts/channel, min RMS, driven into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.02% total harmonic distortion. Simulated walnut grain cabinet.

DAY IN COURT

This November 13 marks the fourth anniversary of the death of Karen Silkwood, who we described (2/21/75) as "the patron saint of the anti-nuclear movement." Silkwood, a 28-year-old lab technician at Oklahoma's Kerr-McGee plutonium plant, died in a suspicious car accident; she was on her way to meet with a *New York Times* reporter to deliver documents that could have shut down the Kerr-McGee facility for allegedly compromising federal safety standards.

A year after her death, a congressional investigation was launched; Kerr-McGee reacted by immediately closing down operations. (The plant remains shut to this day.) Congress was stonewalled a year later, however, when the FBI refused to cooperate. The Silkwood family then sued the FBI and Kerr-McGee in federal court, charging that Silkwood's activities were being monitored and that the company, through negligence, is legally responsible for allowing plutonium to be removed from the plant and spread around her apartment—an incident that occurred only weeks before her death.

So far, the plaintiff's *pro-bono* lawyer, Danny Sheehan, has forced two presiding judges off the case; a third, Frank G. Theis, was brought in from Wichita, Kansas last January.

Environmental and feminist groups have raised $100,000 in the past two years, mainly through concerts, to help defray legal expenses. The trial will start any month now.

WAIT TILL NEXT YEAR

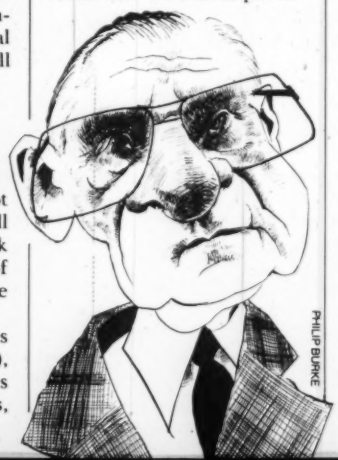
The 1978 season was not especially kind to Bill "Spaceman" Lee and Mark "The Bird" Fidrych, two of the baseball players we've profiled in recent years.

Fidrych ("The Bird Is The Word," 8/20/76), known in previous seasons for talking to baseballs, spent most of this year talking to doctors instead. He had tendonitis in his right shoulder and was able to pitch for the Detroit Tigers in only three games. (He had two wins and one no-decision.) When wizened old men gather to talk baseball you will sometimes hear it said that with a healthy Bird, Detroit could have won the pennant.

At one point this year, Bill Lee ("Can A Screwball Save The Red Sox," 9/30/77) had a 10–3 record, but he slid to 10–10 and was not used as a starting pitcher after that. This year as last, Lee will be better remembered for his quips than his wins. On Red Sox manager Don Zimmer: "I haven't been playing since I called him a gerbil." On Boston's late-season choke: "Management got rid of the vendors outside the stadium so they could make more money. They threw this one gypsy vendor in jail, whose family had been there since the park opened. That was the day we went on our losing streak."

HEARD ANY GOOD ONES LATELY?

Earl Butz, who has been teaching agriculture economy at Purdue University since *New Times* revealed his version of the three things "coloreds" want (10/15/76), is apparently in search of greener pastures. His debut in the lucrative recording industry is the flip side of a a song entitled "Farmers Are the Roots of America." The Butz performance is a narration in praise of the American farmer, replete with the former Agriculture Secretary's opinions on crop subsidies and the superiority of American to Soviet farming.



Clarence Tharas, co-author of the original song, says that he's played the Butz side for 50 people, many of whom have reacted with "goosebumps, chills and tears." Tharas predicts that the record, available at state fairs throughout the Midwest for a mere $4.00, will be a "farm classic."

SECT WITHOUT GUILT

When SLA members Bill and Emily Harris granted an exclusive interview at Los Angeles Jail to *New Times* (3/5/76), it made national headlines because their account contrasted sharply with Patty Hearst's court testimony.

On September 1, 1978, the Harrises entered a surprise plea of guilty to the charge of abducting Patty Hearst. "We feel no remorse," they declared, "and in fact we're proud of it." They were scheduled to be sentenced on October 3.

Patty, meanwhile, is serving a seven-year sentence at federal prison in Pleasanton, California, where she becomes eligible for parole next July. The Harrises' guilty plea prompted various Hearst supporters to call for her release. California Senator Hayakawa last month urged President Carter to free Patty, because she was convicted "in a saga much too far-fetched for a reader of fiction to believe." The National Organization for Women (NOW) recently decided to support legal efforts to get Patty out of jail. Gloria Allred, coordinator of NOW's L.A. chapter, talked with Patty this summer and reported that the Hearst heiress "considers herself a feminist." Patty is not bitter about her fate, said Allred, but she is worried about getting a job.

For their part, the Hearsts have attempted to overturn Patty's armed robbery conviction on the grounds that her counsel, F. Lee Bailey, was "inept." Bailey promptly countered the accusation by proclaiming that it would boomerang and lead to revelations "more serious than those she'd been tried for." Any effort to prove his incompetence, said the feisty attorny, would result only in putting "a whole new bucket of worms on the table."

BROADWAY 2-NIGHT

It's been a good year for Martin Mull, cover boy of our Comedy Issue (1/9/78). *America 2-Night* enjoyed another 13-week run (Mull wrote the last—and best—show of the series), and Norman Lear is writing a movie in which Martin and Fred Willard (Jerry Hubbard) will star.

Mull's first movie, *FM*, was a critical and financial disaster, but his performance was unanimously singled out for praise; now Universal wants him to write and star in his own film. And his seventh album, *Sex and Violins*, sold about 100,000 copies.

Following his wedding last month to costume designer Sandra Baker, Mull hit the road on his first tour in 16 months. In mid-October he returns to Malibu to write the one-man show he will bring to Broadway's Belasco Theater in late December. After that, he begins work on his first album for Elektra-Asylum Records, which he is thinking of calling *Martin Becomes Elektra*.

TOWER POWER

"Sam Lovejoy had a vision," we said (10/18/74), "a strong, Thoreau-crazed vision that perhaps it was possible for one man, acting alone, to upset the billion-dollar technological juggernaut with its everlastingly deadly nuclear radiation wastes."

That juggernaut was symbolized by a 500-foot tower that Northeast Utilities had erected in Montague, Massachusetts, near the commune where pony-tailed

NOT A DRUG

Amazing "Burn-fat-by-the-hour" program Developed by Doctors at Boston Medical School

BURNS AWAY MORE FAT EACH 24 HOURS THAN IF YOU RAN 14 MILES A DAY!

INCREDIBLE "CRASH-LOSS" BREAKTHROUGH REPORTED IN LEADING AMERICAN MAGAZINES WORKS SO FAST YOU CAN ACTUALLY MEASURE THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUR WAISTLINE IN 24 TO 48 HOURS!

Yes, LOSE up to 6 POUNDS the first 48 HOURS — LOSE up to 12 POUNDS the first 7 days — LOSE up to 4, 5, even 7 POUNDS MORE the next 7 days — and continue to burn away as much as 7 to 9 pounds more fat every 2 weeks thereafter, (if you still need it) . . . until you've finally lost 50 — 70 — 100 pounds OR MORE . . . **without fasting, without constant willpower, without constant pangs of hunger or a single moment of body-racking exercise!**

Recommended by the U.S. Government's very own doctors to members of Congress who want to lose weight fast . . . Hailed as the weight-loss "breakthrough of the century" by leading medical journals . . . here at last is the most effective NO-DRUG program for FAST — INSTANT — PERMANENT LIFETIME WEIGHT-LOSS ever made available to the public without a prescription!

WORKS SO FAST THE FIRST WEEK ALONE YOU LOSE AS MUCH AS 1½ TO 2 POUNDS OF BOTH FLUID AND FAT EVERY 24 HOURS!

Direct from the pages of medical journals and leading American magazines come reports of an incredible "fat burning" breakthrough by medical researchers at one of Boston's foremost medical schools! Reports of a new "crash-loss" program (featuring a remarkable natural substance) that safely yet surely steps up FAT-BURNING METABOLISM . . . forces your system to ATTACK bulging pockets of fat . . . and starts to shrink and burn that fat in just a matter of hours!

Yes, from one of New England's leading medical centers comes the new SUPER FAT-BURNING way to turn up your "inner furnace" . . . unlock those clinging pockets of fat . . . break them down SO FAST . . . you burn off excess bulge at the unbelieveable rate of up to **6 POUNDS of both fluid and fat GONE the very first weekend alone!**

Think of it! You actually burn away more fat each 24 hours than if you ran 12 to 14 miles a day! Lose more inches each week than if you did 300 sit-ups each morning and 300 push-ups each night! Actually LOSE as much as A FULL SIZE THE FIRST 7 DAYS . . . **and from 3 to 5 inches off your waistline the very first month!**

That's right! Weight-loss results and inches-off wonders that absolutely stagger the imagination. Just look:

U.S. ARMY OFFICERS LOSE WEIGHT 3 TIMES FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE!

Case History #1: When medical researchers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles first tested this new hi-amino concept on a scientific weight-loss program . . . they reported astonishing results of as much as 12 POUNDS LOST IN JUST THE FIRST 7 DAYS! — 16 to 18 pounds gone by the end of week number two — and most mind-boggling of all — U.S. Army Officers actually losing weight 3 times faster than ever before! As much as 50 POUNDS GONE, like that!

WAISTLINES SHRINK UP TO 3 INCHES IN 7 DAYS — A FULL 5 INCHES SMALLER IN A SINGLE MONTH!

Case History #2: When first rumors of this medical breakthrough leaked out to professional actors, actresses and celebrities . . . they immediately rushed to the offices of America's leading weight-loss specialists to get their hands on this magic compound"; and no wonder! Because the first week alone they carved away as much as 2 pounds a day . . . 13 pounds a week . . . were forced to take in their belts 3 notches smaller in just 10 days!

DOCTORS REPORT: AVERAGE LOSS — 57 POUNDS!

Case History #3: But most significant of all . . . when universities, hospitals and medical schools, (such as New York's Leading Medical School and Cleveland's largest hospital) tested this newly discovered "crash-loss program" on patients who all their lives had been hopelessly overweight . . . they reported astonishing losses of as much as 2 pounds a day at the start . . . 20 to 30 pounds a month . . . as much as 70 pounds lost over a single summer season! — by simply stepping up their fat-burning metabolism and **burning, melting, oxidizing** 50, 70, 100 pounds of hard-set fat . . . FASTER, SURER than they had ever dreamed possible!

WORKS LIKE "POWDERED HEAT" — MAKES YOUR INNER FURNACE BREAK DOWN BODY FAT!

What is this wondrous new development that helps safely stimulate fat-burning metabolism and shrink your body's fat cells the moment it starts working in your system? It is a totally new concept in the war against fat. An ANTI-FAT WEAPON unlike anything you've ever seen, or tried in your life. A FAT-BURNING aid that helps you convert body fat to body fuel AUTOMATICALLY . . . and EVAPORATE excess pounds and inches starting the very first day!

Think of it! A medically proven formula that is such an effective reducing aid . . . that when combined with the food you eat on this "crash-loss" program . . . **burns off as much fat each 24 hours as if you jogged up to 14 miles a day . . . or played 3 hours of tennis in the most brutal heat!**

The name of this wondrous amino formula is "THERA-SLIM-100" and here is precisely how you use it to win the body and figure of your dreams as you:

LOSE UP TO 4 TO 6 INCHES OFF YOUR WAISTLINE
LOSE UP TO 2 TO 5 INCHES OFF YOUR HIPS
LOSE UP TO 3 INCHES OFF YOUR THIGHS
LOSE UP TO 4 INCHES OFF YOUR BUTTOCKS
LOSE UP TO 4 INCHES OFF YOUR STOMACH

and as we've said before, starting not in weeks, but in mere days.

HELPS YOUR BODY CONVERT STORED UP FAT TO BURNED UP ENERGY! At this very moment — having read this far — you are but one short step away from LIFETIME IMMUNITY TO FAT! Now comes your FINAL GIANT STEP into a whole new world of LIFETIME SLIMNESS.

Of course, there is one thing you must keep in mind. With the "THERA-SLIM-100" way to LIFETIME SLIMNESS you cannot gorge yourself on all sorts of fattening foods, candies and desserts. Not that you'd ever want to, because with "THERA-SLIM-100" — due to your new, stepped up metabolism — besides enormous weight-loss you also experience a loss of hunger. Which makes it one of the easiest ways to lose weight fast. Now here's how simple it is:

STEP #1 — YOU EAT

In addition to the wide and tasty selection of food you enjoy morning and night, (all scientifically programmed to help maintain a high-level of FAT BURN-OFF) . . .

STEP #2 — YOU TAKE "THERA-SLIM-100" hi amino compound.

Once a day, you take "THERA-SLIM-100" in a glass of water, (just like refreshing fruit juice). This hi-amino intake helps keep the fat-burning chain-reaction going ALL 24 HOURS OF THE DAY — NON STOP!

STEP #3 — YOU HAVE AUTOMATICALLY STEPPED UP YOUR FAT-BURNING METABOLISM — SO YOU AUTOMATICALLY BURN OFF EXCESS WEIGHT!

In virtually no time at all, you make your inner furnace accelerate fat burn-off. Safely, gently, yet surely you cause a gradual change in your fat-burning metabolism as you "rev-up" that inner furnace.

The result: Your body begins to eliminate stored-up fat and fluid at a rate so incredibly fast, the very first weekend alone YOU DRAIN AWAY AS MUCH AS 5 OR 6 POUNDS!

In short, with the "THERA-SLIM-100" weight-loss program you force your body to automatically convert body fat to body fuel . . . automatically shrink fatty cells . . . drain off excess flab . . . flush it right out of your system ONCE AND FOR ALL!

Never before has medical science offered you a surer, faster, more effective weight-loss method, (short of total fasting) than this super fat-burning breakthrough development at one of Boston's Leading Medical Schools.

THE FACTS ARE IN! THE RESEARCH IS DONE! THE INCREDIBLE WEIGHT-SLASHING RESULTS HAVE BEEN PROVEN BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT BY MEDICAL SCHOOLS — HOSPITALS — DOCTORS — AND SCORES AND SCORES OF OVERWEIGHT PATIENTS! NOW THE FINAL STEP IS UP TO YOU!

REMEMBER: You must see dramatic results in just 24 hours — results you can measure with both your scale and your tape measure . . . you must lose:

up to 6 lbs. the first 48 hours
up to 12 lbs. the first 7 days
up to 7 lbs. more the next 7 days

or it costs you nothing! Simply return within 10 days for full refund (except postage and handling, of course). Act now!

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IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE — READ THIS!

What you see on this page is the announcement of the latest breakthrough by medical science in the war against fat. Developed at one of Boston's leading medical schools, the incredible weight-loss results this new "crash-burn" program delivers are so astonishing (average loss 57 lbs.) it has been featured in every leading medical journal . . . given headline coverage in the medical-news columns of many major newspapers. Aside from — ABSOLUTE STARVATION — there is no surer, faster, more effective way to slash away pounds and inches than with this Boston medical school discovery.

However, before starting we advise you to consult with your physician to be sure you are in normal health and your only problem is excess weight. Individuals with gout, heart disease, diabetes or pregnant women should not use it at all. As a matter of fact, we insist that you show this entire program to your family physician . . . have him check you regularly to make sure you're not losing too much, too fast . . . and advise when you've lost enough. See if he doesn't agree that the "THERA-SLIM-100" road to Lifetime Slimness, including the recommended progressive daily toneup, isn't by far the most effective approach to the conquest of excess weight ever developed by medical science.

MAIL NO-RISK COUPON TODAY

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Caroline Road, Philadelphia, PA 19176

Yes, I want to burn away excess weight fast and permanently with this doctor's "crash-loss" program featuring amazing new high-amino compound "THERA-SLIM-100".

Please rush me the offer I have checked below. If not delighted, I may return it in 10 days and you will refund the full purchase price (except postage & handling, of course).

CHECK OFFER DESIRED:

☐ (#009) Full 10-Day Supply . . . only $7.95 plus 50¢ postage & handling.

☐ (#017) Full 15-Day Supply . . . only $10.95 plus 75¢ postage & handling.

☐ (#025) Full 20-Day Supply . . . only $12.95 plus $1 postage & handling.

☐ (#033) Full 30-Day Supply . . . only $17.95 plus $1 postage & handling.

Amount enclosed $_____ PA residents add 6% sales tax. Check or money order, no CODs please.

CHARGE IT: (check one) Exp. Date_____

☐ Visa / BankAmericard

☐ Master Charge Bank Number ____ ____ ____ ____

Credit Card #_____

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Div. of American Consumer, Inc.

Sam Lovejoy lives. The tower was designed to gather environmental data in advance of NU's construction of 2,300-megawatt twin nuclear reactors, the largest in the world. At 3 a.m. on Washington's Birthday 1974, Lovejoy, in an act of civil disobedience, single-handedly toppled the tower. He gladly went to trial, but was let down when the judge threw the case out of court on a technicality before it reached the jury.

The tower itself, however, was rebuilt within three weeks, and Lovejoy let it stand. "I support the tower staying erect," he explains. "Now every time people look at it, they see an advertisement for anti-nuclear sentiment."

DORIS KEARNS' AMERICAN DREAM

Readers of Gerry Nadel's "Love, Literature and Lyndon" (7/11/75) will remember that Doris Kearns was in a bit of a jam when last we visited her. Harvard's government department had nominated Kearns for tenure, but her then-unfinished "psycho-biography" of Lyndon Johnson, the basis for the department's nomination, had become something of a *scandale* in literary, political and academic circles. (All hell had broken loose when she tried to sever her contract with Harper & Row, move to Simon & Schuster for a higher advance, and bring her lover Richard Goodwin in as co-author.)

Kearns never did get tenure at Harvard; the university granted her an unusual three-year extension, after which a committee would have decided her fate, but she quit a year later. Meanwhile, she has married Goodwin, given birth to two sons and watched happily as the LBJ book (*Lyndon Johnson and The American Dream*, written ultimately by Kearns alone and published by Harper & Row) piled up impressive sales figures and favorable reviews.

"It worked out okay," Kearns says. "Old Johnson—who would have thought?"

"THAT COUGH SOUNDS SERIOUS. I RECOMMEND BRAIN SURGERY."

Dr. John G. Nork was America's leading malpractitioner, according to our grisly cover story (8/22/75) about the string of litigation brought against the Sacramento orthopedist by the victims of his horribly botched operations. Nork, said author Roger Rapoport, "was running a virtual slaughterhouse, turning out one cripple after another with his needless surgery."

As the suits against him mounted, Nork's license was eventually revoked and he moved to Scottsdale, Arizona, where he is reportedly working for a medical employment agency. Attorney Ed Friedberg, who prosecuted the Nork cases, says they have all been settled, except for the largest one, a $3.7 million judgment still on appeal. So far, Nork's insurance carriers have paid out a total of $11 million.

EST MARCHES ON

Werner Erhard's est training program was first brought to our readers' attention in a glowing report by Marcia Seligson (10/18/74): "I think that est has been one of the truly powerful experiences of my life," she concluded. "And I love Werner Erhard." At that point, 35,000 people had graduated from est sessions in five cities.

By the time we took a second, more in-depth peek behind the mysterious est curtain (3/19/76), the ranks of est graduates had swelled to 70,000, and training sessions were being conducted in 12 cities. Jesse Kornbluth's investigative profile of the man and his self-help organization was far from flattering, but the movement marched on nevertheless.

Today, est counts more than 160,000 Americans in 26 cities who have experienced the two-weekend program. Erhard has also opened est centers in Europe and, most recently, India. Tuition, which was $200 for Seligson and $250 for Kornbluth, is now $300. The bottom line: est is one of the most profitable Me Decade ventures around, grossing more than $15 million a year.

And 11 books have been published about the phenomenon, the latest a just-released biography of Erhard by philosopher William Warren Bartley III (Clarkson N. Potter, $10). The dust jacket contains blurbs from Jerry Rubin ("Werner Erhard . . . [is] one of the major historical figures of our time"), Valerie Harper ("Werner Erhard is the most extraordinary person I know") and John Denver ("Werner epitomizes for me what it is to be a human being.")

FUTURE CROCK

Well, the results are in, and it seems that an incredible total of more than 213 million Americans followed our advice and boycotted the Nixon memoirs (5/15/78). Sure, there were those who bought the book—some 300,000 of them, and we certainly don't criticize them for doing so. When Warner Books brings out the paperback in November 1979, several more people will probably buy it, as is their right under the laws of this great nation.

But the former President has apparently tired at last of rehashing his sordid past, and is looking to the future. His next book, *The Real Presidency*, will, according to a Warner Publishing press release, "focus on some of the principal challenges American Presidents will face during the balance of the 20th Century." The project has forced him to postpone his less-than-eagerly awaited world tour until the manuscript, due next spring, is delivered.

OB-LA-DI, OB-LA-DA

Life goes on for Charlie Smith, the subject of Sam Merrill's award-winning profile, "The Oldest Living American" (2/6/76).

In 1976, at the age of 134, Charlie was awarded an honorary high-school diploma by the Polk County (Florida) school board. At the ceremony he received a Winnie-the-Pooh bear from newsmen, and a congratulatory telegram from then-President Ford.

Last November, Charlie's right leg was amputated below the knee after gangrene set in on his toe. Doctors felt that an artificial limb would be too confusing for him, so he now sits in a special cushioned chair equipped with a tray and wheels. "Charlie is not as talkative as he used to be, but he's in good spirits," says Ruth Aiple, administrator of the Bartow Convalescent Center in Bartow, Florida. "At times he seems strong, but then other days he's not quite as strong, we don't understand why. We were having a problem getting him to drink his nutriment at one point, so we flavored it with rum extract. Now he really likes it."

Meanwhile, Charlie has become a legend in his own time. PBS kicks off the third season of its *Visions* series on October 9 (9–10:30 P.M.) with "Charlie Smith and the Fritter Tree," a dramatization of Charlie's life.

For his 136th birthday on July 4, the celebration was a quiet one, with the staff trying to keep away visitors to avoid overly exciting him. A minister and his wife were allowed to see him, and the woman kept asking Charlie if he believed in God, if he spoke to Jesus. "No, ma'am," he said. "I don't talks to no one I don't see." But Charlie, she said, don't you want to go to heaven? "No, ma'am. I don't know no one who's been there who's ever been back." ●

Linda Ronstadt

LIVING IN THE USA

INCLUDES THE HIT SINGLE

Back In The USA

Produced by Peter Asher

FEATURING: KENNY EDWARDS, WADDY WACHTEL
RUSSELL KUNKEL, DON GROLNICK, DAN DUGMORE
ENGINEERED BY VAL GARAY
AVAILABLE NOW ON ASYLUM RECORDS AND TAPES

asylum

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PIECES OF PYNCHON

"Nobody knows where he lives. Nobody knows what he looks like, or sounds like, or smells like, or whether he laughs much... But I wanted to find him"

by Robert Cooke Goolrick

Mexico City. The message had said to wait, and of course, having come so far, I waited, and of course I had gotten horribly sick. Now the room in the full moon of midnight lay like a tired ghost littered with the signs of fever unbroken. Sheets all roiled up, pajamas specked with yellow vomit, half-drunk bottles of mineral water, morphine tablets cheaply bought and badly shot—the one comfort of it all being the certain knowledge that the room was of the sort your mother would, if she knew you were there, come and take you away from.

It was hot. It was late. Perhaps because of the fever, or perhaps because the wind had shifted to some much more malign quarter of the compass, I woke up. I was not alone. A spidery shadow moved softly on the opposite wall. I turned on the light. The old bellboy of the hotel, last vestige of elegance now gone as seedy as the rest, was picking through my shirts, turning the cuffs to see the maroon monogram.

"What the hell are you doing?" I shouted, my fever lunging at him through the room, my body unable to move.

He stopped, turned toward me, dry lips smiling, showing very bad teeth. "I thought you wanted to see me."

"I didn't send for anybody."

"Ah. But you did. You see, I'm Thomas Pynchon...."

□

No. It didn't happen like that. I've never been to Mexico City, never saw Tom Pynchon there. I've never taken morphine. Maybe we should start this all over, and this time I'll really tell you about Thomas R-for-Ruggles Pynchon, how I looked for him and what I found.

□

Something had gone all mushy and rotten in the heart of America. Life had lost image, and we had lost belief. No one was guilty, no one responsible. So we moved, intangible as the world around us, from event to event, from the theater to the discotheque and back again, stopping off for a quick peek at the galleries to see who was desperately painting what, a television sort of life: fast, acrid, without substance. Mushy and rotten.

Life became a rather medicated extravaganza, a pharmaceutical parody of monasticism and self-containment. All around, people were leaping to est, or to ever more complicated forms of charging high-priced articles, or to cocaine habits or to homosexuality. Men confused me with their fine clothes and careful, Victorian mustaches, and somehow it was a leap, like most others, that required more faith than I could find. So I lived like most everybody, torn between two possibilities that are equally unreal; the everything and the nothing that surround us at every moment.

But one day, at lunch in a Japanese restaurant, I wanted to find Thomas Pynchon. Not so much because he would know the truth—I had no questions and he probably had no answers—but just to have searched and to have found and touched one other thing outside myself, something whose existence was problematical but could, through faith and diligence, be proved.

I don't know why he occurred to me in particular. Nobody knows where he lives. Nobody knows what he looks like,

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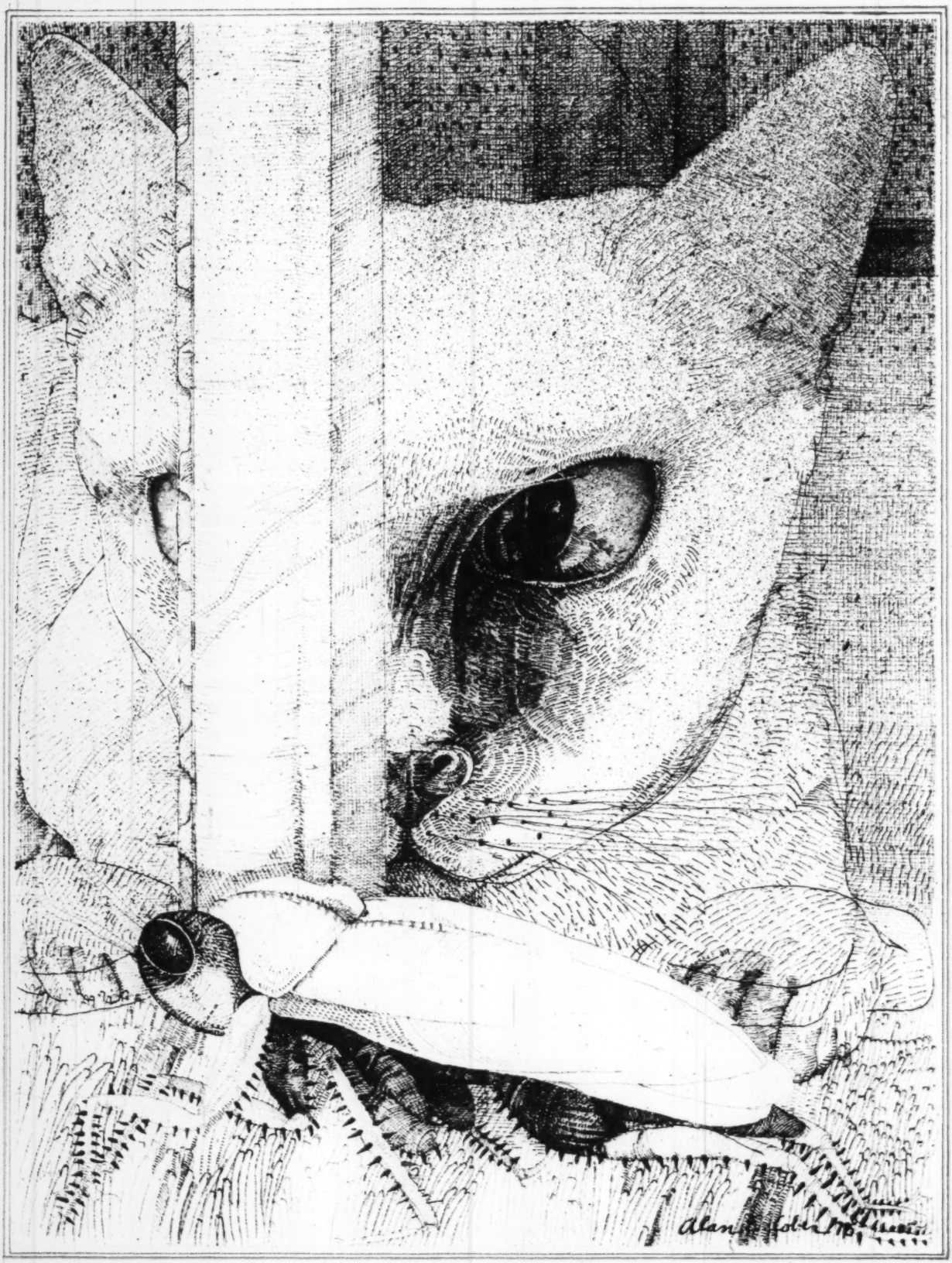
Robert Cooke Goolrick, who last wrote about Edward Gorey for New Times, *is currently at work on a musical novel.*

Illustrations by Alan E. Cober



or sounds like, or smells like, or whether he laughs much. He has given the world, from his great distance, three novels, some short stories, a piece in the *New York Times Magazine*.

He has won the National Book Award, the Faulkner Prize. He has won and refused the William Dean Howells Medal, which is given to the most important work of fiction to be published in America every five years.

His first book, *V.*, was published in 1963. It is a tangled maze of events revolving around the search of one Herbert Stencil to uncover the identity of a mysterious woman whose initial he finds mentioned in his father's journals. It is often funny, it is sometimes wise, and it is very often sophomoric, overdone to the point of ridicule in the obsessive exactitude of its historical details, which range from the history of the Fashoda incident in Egypt in 1898 to the exact lingo and downbeat cool of New York in 1956.

It is a very long book that does not hold up terribly well over the years, but it has about it the unmistakable first flash of genius. Critics have written reams about it, students now study it with reverential patience, Richard Poirier called it "the most masterful first novel in the history of literature. . . ."

It's one of those books critics love because there is so much literary style to it; allusions, alliterations, metaphors, metopes, triglyphs. It's full of mysterious clues and cross references and arch insinuation. But it seems to be about a rather simple thing. Or rather, two simple things.

The first is coincidence. As the title implies, in the shape of its single letter, parallels converge. These moments of coincidence are the heart of *V.* They are the nodes at which things seem to happen in a random world. Critics have trotted out every analytical reference from quantum physics to *Duck Soup*, but it takes no special contortion to see that, for Pynchon, the world is full of vague and often threatening intangibles, and that at these moments of coincidence, these chance meetings of disparate elements, some truth is established, as if, suddenly, we could tell both what a thing is and how fast it is going. It is not very permanent, and it is ultimately not very comforting. For all the book's characters, the central truth, what has happened in the past, what the future will bring, and what It Was All About will remain untouchable. Things will appear, only to hurtle into the Void that always waits with an unblinking eye.

But, and this is the second thing, the world is so full of phenomena, events past and present, that we can, indeed, must, put things together almost any way we want and seem to make a system out of it all. The only convergences that matter are the ones we can see. The others are mere possibilities in the malevolent void waiting to devour us, either with the ultimate revelation of a horrible truth we cannot name, or with an obscene silence. Pynchon's is a picture of the world as the shaky construction of a fanatical paranoid, but a construction that must be made in order to stave off the final admission that nothing is of any meaning; and meaning, if it existed, would have no value.

The brilliance of the book is that it becomes the thing it talks about. Its endless detail, its childish and maddening insistency on coincidence, its structuring of the world around an irrelevant hollow, all cause *V.*, to paraphrase Archibald MacLeish, not to mean but to be. You could explicate it for years, and come away from all that drudgery with a hell of a lot of useless arcana, and no more, really, than the same vaguely disquieting feeling the book gave you on first reading—the feeling that something is wrong but you can't quite put your finger on it, that something is missing but you haven't the faintest idea where to look.

"The way to find him is to find somebody who has reason to hate somebody who knows where he is. I can't tell you where to go"

And that, in easy-to-digest pill form, is what all of Pynchon is about. The second book, *The Crying of Lot 49*, is, in view of the massive length of the other two books, only a short story, a flip of Pynchon's wrist. It is about the postal system, it really and truly is. A woman named Oedipa Maas, wife of Mucho, suburban housewife inextraordinaire, your average American late-sixties neurotic and seeker, stumbles on what she thinks is an ancient alternate postal system, operating in secret. This becomes for her a symbol of The Plot, of all They have done to us over the years, creating systems to keep us in our places, places that turn out more and more to be some barren housing project in a thinly fertile California. Oedipa looks for the system she believes is there, and can find only the refuse—vague, useless details of the system called The Tristero; loses, in her search, husband, lover, psychiatrist, sanity and safety, all to find what she knows can only be, in the end, a very small truth.

The book is filled with manic hilarity and vast cleverness, but it's a sad book, like picking through the tattered contents of an abandoned house. Coming at the slag end of a bright and poisonous decade, it tells of a woman who looks for the hope of late-sixties America, and comes up empty handed and grasping for straws. In search of what we always called The American Dream, she finds instead the detritus of American reality; faithless, hopeless, entropic.

Gravity's Rainbow is mammoth. It is about the end of World War II, more specifically about the rocket known as the V-2. *V* and now V-2.

Gravity's Rainbow won the National Book Award, and later the Howells Medal. It is wonderfully brilliant, the writing clear and often lyrically, guiltlessly sentimental. The book is chock-a-block full of detail, and it is of course about paranoia and convergence. It says that, in the mercantile system that produced the rockets that produced the war that produced all the years that followed, the place where the rocket takes off and the place where it lands are in reality the same spot. They are connected by more than the arc of destruction. There is really no difference between them.

It takes 400 pages for Pynchon to get going on this idea, and it takes almost 400 more for him to get tired of it. I would venture to say that *Gravity's Rainbow* is one of the least read important books ever. It is important. It is dense and difficult, but it is a masterpiece of idea and execution. Pynchon has found, miraculously, more than any other writer, a metaphor for modern American life, a way of speaking that tells us more about ourselves than we most likely care to know.

And it is, emotionally, an act of great and kind faith, a belief that some truth can still be located and preserved in words. And perhaps even that there are still those with the courage and care to wade through the 760 pages on the off chance that some of that truth may actually emerge.

□

In an age in which fame is now served up as a smorgasbord where most people eat too much and never find sustenance, Pynchon has achieved fame by refusing to sample a single dish. Through it all, the hoopla and the high praise, Pynchon has refused to be lured into the public eye, onto the carousel of the fame that was waiting for him, glittering, bitchy, eternal, prepaid. A sort of literary Howard Hughes, cloaked in mystery, closely protected and almost invisible. His editors at Viking say nothing. His agent says nothing. His family and friends get lumps in their throats and refuse to talk. He has never been found,

never been photographed.

I knew that the usual roads would not find him, people a lot more clever than I had tried them all, and that, in the end, there was nothing I wanted to ask him; it didn't matter in the slightest to me how many ice cubes he liked in his drinks, whether or not he snorted the incredibly long lines of cocaine one feels dribbling off the pages of *Gravity's Rainbow*, or where he lived now or what secret dark facts he held about his apple-pie boyhood. So I looked for alternate routes, ways not so trampled. I looked, I suppose, for a miracle of belief, that some other thing existed and could be found and touched and finally known.

□

It takes, unhappily, no more than a desk and writing supplies to turn any room into a confessional. This may have nothing to do with the acts we have committed, or the humours we do go in and out of. It may be only the room—a cube—having no persuasive powers of its own. The room simply is. To occupy it, and find a metaphor there for memory, is our own fault.—V.

□

"What you're talking about here is the absolute power of literary gossip," said an editor. "The way to find him is to find somebody who has reason to hate somebody who knows where he is. I can't tell you where to go. But you should talk to Peter Kemeny. He knows everything about everybody, and has good reason to hate a lot of people. He's crazy, but very smart. He may know nothing, but find him and ask him. It's a place to start."

She wrote his name on a little piece of paper and gave it to me, and I looked for Peter Kemeny. He didn't work where he used to work. He wasn't listed in any of the lists that were supposed to show his name. Oh, he's crazy, people said. Poor boy, doesn't he live with his mother?

Those like Slothrop, with the greatest interest in discovering the truth, were thrown back on dreams, psychic flashes, omens, cryptographies, drug-epistomologies, all dancing on a ground of terror, contradiction, absurdity.—Gravity's Rainbow.

□

There was a very famous murder on 72nd Street, one of those best-seller ones, but the sun still shines with a sort of outmoded crispness, illuminating the skinny hustle and the Puerto Rican liquor stores of upper Broadway, not reaching far enough to cut the gloom of the long dark bar where a girl went, picked out a man with just the right kind of swagger to take her home and slit her throat.

You can see the windows of her apartment, through the golden motes of a Broadway afternoon, from inside the two rooms where Joseph Brugman lives. Joseph Brugman is a psychic. He closes his eyes and predicts the future; uncovers the past, finds lost souls who have left their wives and wandered off to North Carolina where they are surprised leading more or less the same kind of lives they were so desperate to leave behind.

In *Gravity's Rainbow* there is a medium named Carroll Eventyr who delves deeply into psychic spaces, and I thought, well, if Pynchon believes it, there's no reason I shouldn't. I've always had a horror of psychics, and Joseph Brugman was quintessentially what I had imagined a psychic to be. Tall, thin, his head almost shaved of its gray hair, he stood in the kitchen cooking a stew that he said was for the cat, although he seemed to be tasting it with relish, seasoning it with the matronly care of the bachelor.

I sat there while he cooked, watching a cockroach that crawled across the floor looking for the warm square of afternoon light that lay between the two second-rate Chinese Chippendale chairs. "I love those chairs with all my heart," said Brugman. "My chairs, my kitty and my Lord."

"Look," I said, "I came here because I want to find somebody. He wrote this book...." I handed over the $4.95 paperback of *Gravity's Rainbow*, 79,000 sold, "...and I happen to believe that if anybody's got an aura, he's got one, and it is strong and bright as something he writes about called the Kirghiz Light, and can be found."

"Well," said Brugman, "how *very* interesting. You've saved us and the Lord a lot of time." He finished his cigarette, put it out in an ashtray on the floor and closed his eyes. Everything stilled. Even the cockroach found his light and lay idling in the avocado green tufts of the shag rug.

Finally Brugman spoke. His voice in the silence, at least in what passes for silence on 72nd Street, was sweet and patient as an old lady's.

"Meecham," he said, and then paused interminably. "Meecham... I see California and Southeast Asia, Vietnam...." His eyes stayed closed, the room growing darker as he spoke, the cat turning over soundlessly.

"I see travel in Europe, in England. He lives now in the United States... lives like a derelict in the United States, drinking, drinking a lot. He is writing ...he lives under another name... poetry, essays of an inspirational nature."

Slowly, delicately, but sweating from the exertion of pulling these bizarre teeth out of the cosmic mouth, he whispered: "I see cities... Pittsburgh, there's a friendship there with somebody... ocean... water... shorelines. He lives where he can see the sea. Cities indicate a positiveness, a power. He may not live there, they are just symbols of great strength, in him, in me... maybe in you. Boston, Manhattan, Florida.

"Argentina... Mexico, I see Mexico. There is a contact there with somebody close, still important to him.

"He is slightly balding, about 5'10"...a little overweight, not in good physical condition, not married.... You will find him through ads, I see ads. He has been in the hospital several times... not well at all. In six months, you will find him, you will see a picture.... Remember, he has gained weight since the picture was taken, grown a mustache, changed his face.

"Stone..." Brugman said. "The word or the name. He is hard to find ...moves from one person to another, from one house to another. Not as a recluse... no, he has friends, mostly male, but no romance. He is energetic and involved—hunting, hunting, almost possessed, you might say.... He is destructive towards himself, not actively suicidal... but fallen to deep despair.

"Beekman... Place or Hospital. Put ads... not in the daily newspapers, but in small literary magazines."

He turned his face to what was left of the light, his eyelids seemed impossibly thin over his fluttering eyes. "Find a woman named Phyllis. She lives in New York, not working, was or is married. She acts for this writer as a friend in the arts.

"I keep hearing, over and over, the word Valence.... You will find him when you are desperate enough." He paused, looked at his watch. "Is there anything you'd like to ask me? You can, you know."

"Why do I want to find him? What am

"I love to talk about him. But I must...*prove* my love by *not* talking about him, ever, to anybody. Does that make sense?"

So it was a dead end. People in the literary crowd drop names. Don Barthelme. Willie Gaddis. Ted Solotaroff. Tom Pynchon. But people seemed to have dropped Peter Kemeny's name altogether. And so did I, after awhile.

One night, months later, Peter Kemeny haunted me in a dream, and I woke up anxious, determined to start the telephone calls again. At breakfast I opened the *New York Times* to read that Peter Kemeny had fallen under the IRT train the day before, at 42nd Street. They say he was brilliant. He was 37. Youth moves so well and breaks so easily. And nobody ever really falls under a train.

□

I looking for?"

"Rapture. A sense of the soul, of the mind, a sense of what you would like to be.

"You are looking for love. Not romantic love, but love all the same. You know," and suddenly I wanted like hell to get out of there, to get away from the cat stew and the cockroaches and the bloody hallways of 72nd Street, "you are a very loving person, but you're all bound up inside, hesitant to open your heart, unable to reveal yourself even to the people you love. That's what you're looking for, what you've set out to find."

"Will I change?" The room was almost dark now, and I could see his eyes glint as the rocker began to sway backwards and forwards. "Yes. You will change." He laughed softly, a nice laugh, really. He wasn't spooky or unkind and whatever the truth of the gobbledygook he spouted out of his darkness, he honestly believed he could see through the thin and breeze-blown curtain of what we call with such quick surety *everyday life*.

"You know," he looked at me. "I don't really know. I just say that because I hope it's true. It's like going into a dark room and hitting out at the light switch. If you push it enough times, the light might come on...."

As I was getting my things together, he asked me to come back. We made an appointment for the next week. I was to call and confirm it.

There was never any answer. The phone would ring and ring with nobody but the cat and the cockroach to hear it.

Two weeks later I dialed Brugman's number, listened to the ringing. "I can't get my psychic on the phone," I said to myself. "There is some hopeless contradiction in terms here somewhere." I hung up and never called again.

Rapture and love. Funny words for a sleazy old ten-dollar psychic to use, telling me in the next breath about his church in New Jersey which got the money I gave him, some Church of the Holy Heebie-Jeebies where a lot of strange types, widows, traveling salesmen, recidivists and pale young men saved from smack got together to predict the future in vague Sybillic sweeps.

Rapture and love. Quite specific, and quite frightening. Rapture, because it implies an obsessiveness that is willing to sacrifice the comfortable to the unimagined; and love because it has become in America the absolute impossible, the gift that is wrapped and rewrapped, never to be given away.

Perhaps what he meant was that in Pynchon I had chosen a love that was possible because it had no object, merely an extended longing for a body that could not be found or desired, having no height, no weight, no texture I would ever know. Like a light switch you could hit a million times in a million ways, and never even see the faintest glimmer in the room where you live.

□

I began to dream about Pynchon. Always the same dream: I would stand on a California street, squinting in the sun, he would walk toward me, past the oleander and bird of paradise growing in that vulgar L.A. profusion. He would wear khaki trousers and a white shirt with the cuff buttons unbuttoned, a sure sign of insanity, my mother once told me. We would shake hands, and I would ask him a question. He would answer softly, I would touch his face.

The question. Sitting in a restaurant, a friend asked me how I would know Pynchon if I found him, how I could be sure he had not sent a fake along just to check the scene out.

Well, I thought, there's the riddle.

In *Gravity's Rainbow* there is an intriguing and probably hilarious riddle that is never answered, a cute and not very important witticism that fascinated me. That's what I'll ask him, I thought. He'll know the answer and I'll know he's real.

□

An article came out two years ago presenting the bizarre but maddeningly well put together theory that Pynchon was really J.D. Salinger. The article claimed that none of the information in Pynchon's austere and cryptographic biography was provable, that it was all a lie promulgated by a clever and well-paid literary cabal, a plot dreamed up by Salinger to replace the failing power of an old persona with the glittering brilliance of a new one. Now, there may be a well-paid and unbelievably foxy literary cabal, and God knows, Salinger must be doing something up there in his New Hampshire concrete bunker, but it seems most unlikely that you could

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The Claretians

A Roman Catholic community of priests and brothers

trade in the black and violet-scented existentialism of the fifties for the electronic, movie-maddened hip which pervades Pynchon's work. Maybe it's an easy match that makes a kind of paranoid sense out of multiple unknowns, the comfort of killing two invisible birds with an imaginary stone, but the theory is a fake. Thomas Pynchon is not J.D. Salinger.

Pynchon really was born in Glen Cove, New York, in 1937. His father is Thomas Ruggles Pynchon, engineer, living to this day out there in a town where he is a prominent Republican.

Pynchon's mother and father live on a street with the all-American name of Walnut Avenue, where they have lived since before the man his mother calls, sweetly, Tom, Jr., went to Cornell in 1953. He graduated in 1959, having taken two years off to go into the Navy, with distinction in all subjects.

I learned all this on the telephone. People spoke quite easily about it all, with the possible exception of the woman in the Cornell alumni office who told me with what sounded like fear in her voice that Pynchon had written to ask that "his name be removed from the alumni lists." She sounded distraught, as though she had personally lost him, or might be pistol-whipped if she told what she *really* knew.

His father is easy to find, his mother easy to talk to. "I can't tell you anything," is what she actually said. "Tom Jr., just wouldn't like it. You see, he likes to do the writing himself." Well, does she see him, or know where he is, could she find him tomorrow if she wanted to? "Well, I really couldn't say."

And Pynchon's brother and sister, do they see him? "They're grown up now." She sounded a little sad, the way mothers do who suddenly find their hands empty. "They're all grown up."

□

Faith and Kirkpatrick Sale are one of those devastatingly bright young New York couples. Lovely house, and a place in the country. Undoubtedly perfect children. A story about them in *People* magazine. He published a highly praised book about the rise of the Southern Rim, she was the copy editor for *Gravity's Rainbow*. They are also very old friends of Pynchon's, since the days of Cornell.

"It's a good thing you got me and not Kirk," said Faith Sale over the telephone. "He would have just hung up in your face."

"I just wanted to ask you one thing," I said. "Could you prove that Tom Pynchon is real, if you had to?"

"Good God, I can't say anything. I mean, I'm not sure I could prove that I'm real. How do you do that?

"But yes, to the best of my knowledge," choosing her words with exact care, "he is a real person as I am a real person. He is not Salinger. He is not Willie Gaddis. He is a separate person. He does exist."

I asked some inane things, trying to lead her on. "Look," she said, sounding tired, and a little rushed, as if Kirk might walk in at any moment, or as if some perfect bouillabaisse were about to boil over and ruin. "I love Tom Pynchon very much. And the funny thing is, I love to talk about him. But I must . . . *prove* my love by *not* talking about him, ever, to anybody. Does that make sense?"

"He does exist, and is very tall, has beautiful eyes and a black mustache, and thinks he looks like Bugs Bunny...."

Well, not really, But I couldn't go on any longer berating an intelligent, soft-spoken woman whose husband might walk in any second from the garden.

□

Professor Irwin Corey was glad to talk. Talk is his business, talk born of intelligence and an almost maniacal will to amuse. Irwin Corey gave the acceptance speech when Pynchon won the N.B.A.

"See, Herb Gardner is a friend of Tom Guinzburg's, and I was doing a play for Herb so they asked me to give this speech. I said that Pynchon wanted to share the award with Solzhenitsyn, that Russian? *Gulag Archipelago* is pure fiction, you know, doesn't have the least little thing to do with anything; I mean, my God, the Russians refused to print it because it was untrue, not a word of truth in it, so it was printed in the end by Russia's enemies.

"I'd never met this Pynchon boy, I had never read the book, so I just made a little speech full of absurdities of various sorts. They all thought I *was* Pynchon, and I'd never even read the thing, which, I might add, I later did, and I found it laborious but interesting, and I just said a few things. I think I quoted H.L. Mencken when he said some fool thing like, 'Nobody ever went broke underestimating the American public.' See, he shared the award with that Isaac Singer, who is also full of shit, so it didn't matter what *I* had to say. I guess everybody just thought it was a parody of Pynchon's style. He lives up in the Poconos, somewhere."

"What?"

"The Poconos. You know, those mountains. They have to send his checks somewhere. I mean, he's made a damned *fortune*. He has to get hold of the money somehow. I gotta go now. Look up in the Poconos."

□

I called Mimi Fariña instead. *Gravity's Rainbow* is dedicated to her late husband, Richard Fariña, who was at Cornell with Pynchon and who died in 1966 two days after his brilliant first novel, *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me*, was published.

"I knew him briefly ten years ago. Being a non-reader, I guess I don't have much to say about him. He does exist, and is very tall, has beautiful eyes and a black mustache, and thinks he looks like Bugs Bunny."

I beg your pardon?

"See, he has big teeth. He thinks they make him look like Bugs Bunny. He doesn't, he just thinks he does. He was very bright, I guess, but so withdrawn that it would be hard to put an exclamation point after him, if you know what I mean. He was just a tall, thin man who was extremely sincere.

"I guess I could find him if I wanted to, but it would take a long time and a lot of old address books that I don't want to go back to."

"Did it surprise you that *Gravity's Rainbow* was dedicated to Richard Fariña?" I asked.

"No. I mean, I guess you dedicated a book to family or to close friends, and they were very tight."

"For a long time?"

"He was best man at our wedding, and a pallbearer at my husband's funeral. I haven't seen him since then."

I was sorry for her, sorry to have spoiled her perfect California morning with thoughts of death and a future that didn't unfurl, and a friend of her husband's who never called again.

□

The dreams continued.

A lady I know came up to me and said, "I know where he has his hair cut."

"Where?" I asked, knowing whom she meant.

"Think of the most dazzling, the most cosmopolitan city you know of."

"Dallas, Texas," I replied, without hesitation. I have never been to Dallas, never thought about it much.

"Exactly. Look in Dallas." She smiled and faded.

□

Everything began to seem infinitely detailed. The smallest gesture, the least meaningful sign would catch my eye as if it were all happening just for me, had been put in front of only my eyes. Everything in the present, all systems operating simultaneously in the front of the mind, spreading layer after layer of infinitely textured life in front of you. The quiddity of life, these details all we have, the only signposts pointing in any direction, and these blurred and contradictory.

Once, in a restaurant in Charlottes-

ville, Virginia, I picked up a small table card which advertised a drink called Black Velvet, equal parts of Guinness and champagne.

Inside the card someone had written, in mannish handwriting with a blunt and spittle-softened pencil, "The interiors of life are always surprising, but seldom awfully interesting."

I carried that little card with me for years in my wallet, always thinking, at every bar, that I really ought to order a Black Velvet, a drink made of equal parts of two drinks which I loathe.

□

Everybody told me not to call Candida Donadio. She's like a little pickup truck with a hard heart, one told me, and she won't tell you anything besides.

But there was nowhere else to go. Candida Donadio is more connected to Pynchon, publicly, than anybody else. She has been his agent for years, and while she has given some maddening interviews in which she has said that Pynchon has never been to her office, that his manuscripts are delivered by "a special messenger from God Almighty," she must know him, she must have seen him. She handles his money, whatever Irwin Corey says, and she must know where he is.

And, as it turns out, she loves to talk about Thomas Pynchon, who walked into her office, aged 24, with the manuscript of *V.* in his hand.

"Wasn't he living in Mexico then?"

Pause. "No, he wasn't in Mexico." She is extremely careful with details and, while she talks with ease, it is difficult to tell whether Candida is being candid or merely cunning. She is certainly good at fanning the flames she is ostensibly quenching, and it stands to reason. The myth may be overblown. It may hide a much simpler and more mundane truth than it would seem to, but Candida Donadio knows quite well that both she and Pynchon stand to make money from the myth.

"I love Tom Pynchon very much," she said in her deep, quasi-oracular voice, a voice with the sound of a heavy stone being dropped down an extremely deep well, the sort one might climb down at noon to see if the stars were visible.

"He is remarkable. He is charming and polite. He lives very much in the world. He has friends. He has laughs. He has been the most extraordinary experience in my life.

"He is extremely generous with information, and if he needs some little bit of knowledge he'll research it for two years. How can I describe to you how brilliant he is? Just believe me when I say that he is rare, an extremely rare critter, the kind that comes along once in a thousand years, Leonardo da Vinci. That's the kind of genius he is.

"He reads an overwhelming amount, but the truth is, with him, the reading

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Alan E. Cober 78

experience becomes somehow the life experience. That's what Georges Roditi said when he called me up at 8:30 in the morning, after staying up all night with *V.*, 'But Candida,' he said. 'But exactly the street. But exactly the color of the houses. He could not know.' But he does know.

"I'll tell you a story. I know a lot about houses, and Tom called me up one day because he wanted to know all about bricks, about what the color of bricks was called. I said that the best, the finest bricks in America have a color which is called "Philadelphia Rose" because all the houses in Society Hill are that particular color, and because the color comes from a special clay which is only found on the banks of, what is that river there? The Schuylkill. So Tom goes and reads everything he can find about bricks and brick houses. Then he goes to Philadelphia, so he can see the houses in Society Hill, and he goes to the riverbank to see where the clay comes from, and takes a sample of it so he can analyze what makes it different from the clay used to make ordinary bricks. All this so he could use the phrase with assurance, so he could know exactly what he meant by it."

She asked me how I had looked for Pynchon, and I ended up telling her about the psychic, whom she said was *all* wrong, although she thought the man may have been reading one of Pynchon's other, previous lives. Hard to say. There *was* a place near the sea, she said, but not anymore. He never drinks. He has never been in the hospital. But the depression part, well, that was true. Pynchon is often subject to fits of severe depression.

"Sometimes I'll get the feeling of a great sadness over him, and he'll call and say, 'Candida, I had my head in the oven.' Once I had a vision of him, and he called, and I told him of it. 'I see you sitting on a kitchen floor. The kitchen is gray. It is 4:10 in the afternoon. Your glasses are broken. There is a Band-Aid near your left eye. You are sitting on the floor reading the *I Ching*.

"There was a long pause, silence on the other end of the telephone. Finally he said, 'Tell me what I threw.'

"The Well," I said, and he said yes, that was what he had thrown, in the gray kitchen at 4:10 in the afternoon.

"You can never find where he is," Candida Donadio said. "He lives nowhere in the world. And he does it because he's shy, painfully shy, and because he thinks his work is terrible. That's why he refused the Howells Medal, because he doesn't think he's good enough. God forbid I should ever praise anything, ever say that anything he writes is good.

"I cannot imagine he is unaware of his gifts, but you can understand that whatever he writes, whatever he creates, he will never be able to match his inner vision, which is so vast, so intelligent.

"He is a scientist by nature. He understands things scientifically. He just chooses to make fiction of what he understands. He has a total gift, and total goodness, and he is always, always totally honorable."

I told her that people had said sweet things about him, and repeated what Faith Sale had said. "The Sales haven't seen Pynchon in four years. Something went on there. Pynchon has an enormous heart, and he got hurt in some way. Faith calls me up to ask how Tom is, and to ask why they never hear from him."

Faith Sale had told me that she and Pynchon had argued, she had mentioned a fight about Pynchon's use of the word "moire" as a verb, a quirky thing he does an unusual number of times in *Gravity's Rainbow*. But it seems a slim excuse to vanish out of a 20-year friendship. I told Candida Donadio that a lady I had met had had drinks with Pynchon and Barthelme at the Sales no more than a year before.

"Impossible," was the reply. "The Sales haven't seen him, his parents haven't seen him. They all call me up to find out how he is." But there was in her voice a vague disquiet, as if there were things going on of which she was unaware, as if Pynchon had broken some sort of trust by leading a life not necessarily led through her. An intriguing puzzle, I said.

"You have to realize, I live with the puzzle." Candida Donadio, deep voice on the phone, the lady who knows what nobody else even imagines, who pulls the strings. *V*, the point at which parallels converge.

□

At a dinner party, I said I was looking for Pynchon, and the woman sitting across from me smiled.

"I know where he lives," she said. "He lives in the same building as Michael di Capua." Di Capua is an editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux. According to the woman they lived in the same brownstone, and the year Pynchon won the N B.A , di Capua could not resist the ultimate one-upmanship of knowing where the mystery resided. She wrote the address on a scrap of paper, and I told her what the editor had said, long before. Find somebody who hates somebody who knows.

"Well. There you have it. I hate Michael di Capua," she said, turning back to her asparagus soup.

□

Three days after my conversation with Candida Donadio, my phone rang at a quarter to ten. It rang once, then stopped. The next night, at quarter to ten, I got it on the first ring. There was nobody on the line. Every night for two weeks the phone rang at exactly the same moment, just one time, and I would pick it up to a dead line, knowing, even as I lifted the receiver, that there was no one there. Perhaps, I thought, only a malfunction in a too-vast system, some cyclical synapse that causes my phone to ring every evening when the house is still. Perhaps that's it.

□

I walked down to Pynchon's house, turned onto the block shaking, passed by the pale red-brick house several times before I got up the nerve to go up the steps.

Of course, his name wasn't on the mailbox. I hadn't expected it would be.

I sat on the steps across the street. It was a hot afternoon and the windows glinted with a burned-out stare.

Somebody later asked me if it looked like the sort of house Pynchon might live in. I answered, "Look. Imagine yourself searching for the Holy Grail. You've sacrificed everything, your children have been slaughtered because you never sent the money to have the drawbridge fixed, you're getting old sleeping in mossy riverbeds, your wife is sleeping with your best friend and you're just about to pack it all in, but there you are, kneeling wearily, waist-deep in the old primeval, and a voice comes out of heaven saying, 'O.K., here's your damned Grail, if you want it so much then,' and a cup appears before you, floating in the sky. At such a time, what you do *not* say is, 'Well, that's very nice. But could I maybe see something with handles on it?'"

"Sometimes I'll get the feeling of a great sadness over him, and he'll call me and say, 'I had my head in the oven'"

In the afternoons, I would sit in front of his house, or in the park nearby, where I watched young girls sunning themselves, watched the endless parade of joggers, saw once a very drunk couple fight and kiss sloppily on the steps of a church.

I sat in the park, looking for a tall thin man with beautiful eyes and a big black mustache who looked like he thought he was Bugs Bunny. You would be surprised how many people fit that description.

There I was, frozen in the heat, unable to walk up the steps and ring the bell, afraid, I suppose, to find either that the mystery did not exist or could be solved.

□

One night I went to the theater. Afterwards, I sat in a garden for a long time with a very pretty woman in a peach-colored summer dress, and then she went away and I went home to bed where I could not sleep. Two o'clock in the morning, lying there sweating and thinking about Pynchon. I live on a street filled with hookers and cheap hotels, and I went to the window to catch some breeze and stood one-legged like a Bantu, watching it all.

I hate living there. It's hot and it's noisy and the warehouses across the street block out most of the sun and block all the breeze but sometimes, when it's two in the morning and the street is slick with oil and drizzle, my block has a certain perverse fascination. I used to live very much alone, and I would think of couples I had seen in the subway, and the thought would always occur to me, what do they *do*? Well, my block can show you an awful lot of what some of them do.

A woman sat in a halter top in the front seat of a brown Cadillac, reading fashion magazines by the glow of the streetlight that hissed from the heat and the rain. The whores tottered out into the street in their five-inch heels to stop traffic and dicker, or to go across the street and chat with their pimps, sartorial marvels who sat up all night drinking cheap wine on the steps of cheaper hotels. One of the whores on my street is over six feet tall. One is pretty. Most are neither.

A car drove by, the boy driving with one hand and masturbating with the other, gazing out through the fogged windows at the whores who darted out at him as he drove past.

Rabbit, who runs a shoeshine parlor, hammered nails into his shoeshine stand, as the rain soaked his back and his bad leg.

There was a terrible fight. Two gay junkies standing in the middle of the street, flailing away at each other with the petulant, frightened smacks that nevertheless could hurt. One man had broken glasses, the other a bloody nose.

The fight was about a TV set. The junkie with the bloody nose had been thrown out of one of the hotels. He had left the room in such haste that he forgot his TV set. "It don't work anyway," he screamed at the taller man who was smacking him in the face, his hand drawing back each time bright with blood.

"That don't matter, Morty. You stupid queer. We can fix it, when we get home. We can maybe sell it. Now you go and get that goddamned TV, or you ain't coming home with me, and then where would you go? You ain't got nowhere, faggot."

"But I don't want to go back in there." He was crying now. Smack. A paper bag full of old copies of the *Daily News* burst open. Papers flew all over the street, under the wheels of the cars that passed inches from where the two were fighting.

"He lives no where in the world. And he does it because he's shy, painfully shy, and because he thinks his work is terrible"

Smack. Smack. Smack, and me standing there in the dark, no better than they, no better than any of them, spending my days making fictions, for God's sweet sake, and not looking much out the windows. The one with the bloody nose went back into the hotel. Seconds later he was carried out by two heavies, and beaten and smacked until he fell to his knees on the sidewalk, punch-drunk. His friend turned from gathering his newspapers, ran and threw himself into the melee, breaking his glasses beyond repair, screaming, creating just enough of a diversion so that the first man could race through the doors, retrieve his TV set and dash to safety. The two young men, in torn clothes dripping with rain, were left alone in a street filled with the smell of blood and hot saki. They circled each other warily, as if there were still some fight left in them somewhere. Then they fell on each other, hugging and kissing, patting dank pages from the *Daily News* to bloody noses, trying, with trembling fingers, to reassemble the glasses that were broken forever, embracing like any teenaged couple at a junior-senior prom. Then, both twitching so badly they couldn't do a balancing act on a two-lane blacktop, they walked hand in hand down to Sixth Avenue where the cabs would go by, sooner or later, and they would go home to love and injections.

Pynchon is right, I thought. The world is what he says it is.

□

I dreamed Pynchon was in a very white hospital, lying in a hospital gown, his dark hair long against cruelly white, crisp pillows.

Pynchon got out of bed, closed the door to the room. I asked him my riddle. He was very affable, smiled and replied, but I couldn't understand what he was saying. Something about keeping an "irony in his pants pockets." I asked him to repeat it, and he did but it did no good, the words were still lost to me.

He wrote down the answer on a piece of paper; I couldn't read the handwriting. He gave me the answer printed on little cards, in various sizes and languages, and the words turned fluid and ran before my eyes.

He lay back on his pillow, tired. He became a woman, became a man again, became, in the end, a little of both. I touched his forehead very softly with my fingertips, and it was cool to the touch, not fevered.

It doesn't matter, I said. Rest.

□

I called Candida Donadio. "Will you have lunch with me?"

"Why?" she answered warily.

"Well, I don't know. All these voices—you, the Sales, Mimi Fariña, Irwin Corey, Cornell. I feel like I'm drowning in a sea of anonymity. I just need to see one face, in the flesh."

There was a long pause while she lit a cigarette. "Tomorrow. Twelve-thirty at my office."

I would wear a black shirt and try to look compelling. Perhaps where faith was failing me, charm would succeed.

□

That afternoon, in Pynchon's park, I thought how useless it all was, how fragile, how borrowed. It was a fantasy of youth, the finding, and I would not find in him what the psychic had told me to look for, what Pynchon himself had called "the nulltime of human love." He would not, dreamlike, extend a magic hand to touch my forehead and place light there. Far better to look for myself, to look for those parts of myself scattered through the years over various landscapes, in various hearts now lost to me. Far better, even, to look for my old friend Peter, whom I had last seen straddling the thin line of his own innate goodness and a borrowed, but extremely possible, slide into a drugged and visionless sadness.

Peter whom I had lost, the way one loses one's college friends, through distance and apathy, whom I realized much later I had loved because his heart was good, and whom I maybe wanted to sleep with, once, I couldn't remember anymore. Peter who had appeared to me on many days in five countries, often in pain, often in need of a friend, who seemed to hold some sort of key to what I had once been and could not get back to. Look for love, the man had said. Look for Peter, a Voice now answered.

□

She is a small, heavy woman with the face of a Sicilian child, topped with a Risorgimento hairdo. We shook hands, hers flashing with two small rings, and ate in an Italian restaurant where the headwaiter knew her and seated us with deference.

After her first vodka Gibson she said,

"He never lived in that house. I lived there, and once Larry Woiwode stayed there, working, because he was having, for very real reasons, trouble finishing a book. But Pynchon never lived there. Live right under somebody who works in publishing, the Pynch? Never.

"I can't help you much. I can't tell you anything, but I can steer you clear of misinformation and lies. What else do you know?"

I knew I would tell her, and that it would all be lies and wrong directions. I wanted to believe that Pynchon himself was somewhere in the restaurant, but I knew that he wasn't. I wanted still to believe that he lived in the brownstone with the pleasant park nearby, walking his dog on summer evenings, but I knew that he did not.

Young Stencil looks for *V.* for 11 years and comes up with a handful of dust and a slow fade into the Mediterranean. I didn't have that kind of time.

"Look. You want specifics? Tom Pynchon once met Donald Barthelme on a street corner. They went to a bar. Pynchon ordered a Campari and soda, your drink." Thinking about it later, I figured it was because he was embarrassed to order a Shirley Temple.

The talk turned to other writers, to how the young cannot write a novel now, because they've seen too much, been trampled on too much, and must wait for 35 before they will begin to be able to recollect the passions of their youth in the tranquility of their middle years; and to Italy where we both had lived, strolling the streets which Pynchon describes but has never seen.

"Once I was there with Dianne," I said. "We were to stay seven days. But on the third morning, I woke up and she was crying, very softly so as not to wake me. I was irritated by her tears. She cried too early in the mornings by then, and the weeping was always followed by a morning of recrimination, and I sort of sharply asked her why she was crying.

"'Because it's so sad,' she said. 'Venice. It's so sad.' And I knew exactly what she meant, the *putti* all had these little stubs for fingers, syphilitic noses, blind eyes. It was all so sad. So we left for home.

"She cried all the way up the Grand Canal. She cried at the window for tickets. She sat in the train compartment, crying.

"Then there was some terrible mix-up with the tickets, so I had to go out into the hallway to discuss it with the ticket man. And naturally a crowd of men all gathered around, the way they do in Italy, and we smoked our cigarettes and the mistake was straightened out and duly written down, and the conductor told me I spoke Italian very well; he could tell I was from Florence by my accent. Then we all finished our cigarettes, and shook hands, and I turned to go back into the hot compartment. He asked me to wait a minute, while all the men strained to see Dianne who had shaved off her eyebrows, it was *la mode* that year, so that even her weeping had a look of continued surprise.

"'We have just one question,' said the conductor, and all the men looked at me as if I had done some terrible thing to her.

"'One question, signore. Why is that beautiful girl crying?'"

"'She's crying,' I said, 'because Venice is so sad. Because Venice makes her cry.'"

"'Oh, yes,' said all the men. *'Certo.* Now we understand. Venice is so sad.' And then they all went away, mopping their faces with handkerchiefs so clean you knew their mothers had washed them, and the train moved south. Dianne stopped crying after awhile and read fashion magazines the rest of the way."

"What a lovely story," Candida Donadio said. "You should write a short story about that someday."

Well, maybe I will. When I'm 35.

The bill came, and she took it. I tried to pay but she said no. "We'll make the Pynch pay for it. I'll charge it to his account."

This man who had haunted my dreams for six months, she calls him The Pynch.

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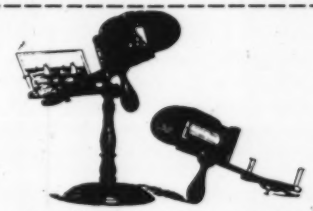

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I asked her one more question. "If you wanted to find Pynchon today, to talk to him, could you do it?"

"No."

"This week?"

"No."

I had told Candida Donadio how everything seemed bizarre and a little sad ever since I had begun to look for Pynchon. As we got up to leave the restaurant where Pynchon had bought me lunch, a man at the table behind us suddenly turned to his two friends, this was on their third or fourth drink and no real lunch anywhere in sight, and he said in a loud, aggressive voice that caught the ears of the whole restaurant, "Well, what the fuck's *she* got to smile about...? The woman's *dying*, for God's sakes." "See what I mean?" I said to Candida, who laughed, but understood perfectly.

□

I found my friend Peter in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. He is an engineer now. I thought of Pynchon's father, and of Rimbaud's letter from Africa: "...what is the use of all this indescribable suffering, if I'm not one day, after a few years, to rest in a place that I more or less like, and have a family of my own, a son at least, whom I shall spend the rest of my life in training according to my own ideas, providing him with the best and most complete education which can be obtained today, and whom I'll see grow into a famous engineer, a man rich and powerful through science. But who knows how long I may last in these mountains here; I may lose my life amongst these people, without any news of me ever coming out again." Who knows how long any of us?

"I want you to know," I said to Peter, "that this story is a little bizarre. But I want you also to know that it is no more bizarre than it seems on the surface. There is nothing to it but what I am going to tell you.

"After graduation, Dianne and I went to London, and lived in a rented room. Walking down Sloane Street one day, I thought of you, and it was pleasant. In the subway, all the way home to Putney, I thought about you, and for three days after that, constantly, night and day.

"The feelings came back every month or so for the next five years, as if you were walking beside me, seeing what I was seeing, talking to the girls I met in cafés.

"After awhile, you weren't just with me, you were often in trouble. I used to walk through Piccadilly and see the junkies lining up for the government methadone, and I hated the faces because I was sure one of them would be you.

"I thought about you because I hoped so much that things would be all right. I thought about you because I realized that...that I loved you, because you had the best heart of anyone I knew at school. I know that the information is of no value to you now, but I think of you because I have loved you, because you were good at heart. It's as simple as that.

"And all these years later, I wanted to ask you two questions. Did it turn out well, or badly? And are you, after all, happy?"

The sunset gave his skin the color of Florence in the spring, lit up, the tight Italian body that played lacrosse every season, the beautiful neck, the eyes a little afraid against his pale smooth skin. I loved him and I did not want him. That was important to know.

Peter was quiet for a long time before he spoke. "I have turned out to be the kind of man my mother and father would be proud of, and I guess that means something to me...I guess that means something.

"As for being happy...no. I'm not happy. Safe job, safe little life. If not completely legal, at least a little more than just this side of the law.

"My father's sister died. He took it badly, and it suddenly occurred to me that he will die someday. I will be the oldest male, and I feel like I can't get free of my father, he will not let me have my own life, will not ever...let me be...free.

"I don't expect my life to reach some plateau of ecstasy and stay there. Once I might have believed that, but not anymore. There will just be more ups and downs." He put on his shoes, stood up, and we drove into Philadelphia for dinner at a cheap lobster house.

There's not much now that one man can do for another. The issue of affection is much too confused and we may never find the proper balance again. So we are left with secret greeds, and not much in the way of comfort.

Driving home, the New Jersey Turnpike was black as the soot that covers it, it was three o'clock in the morning, June, hot night blowing fire across the flats, and the eternal flames that will burn long after they have choked the air out of us snapped like flags in the wind.

In the dawn, the whores even gone home to bed, I knew one thing. I had found a friend again and he had not died. The road taking me to Pynchon had taken me to something that more properly belonged to me, something I had needed without knowing it: one quiet moment face to face with a simple affection.

I had learned this from Pynchon and Peter: We do have to grow old, but we do not have to grow as cynical as the years in which we age. And the heart is capable of more than spastic jerks in the electric chair of New York City.

□

No. I did not find Thomas Ruggles Pynchon. He is too well hidden. He is too agile, too delicate to pursue with a vengeance. But I did have one more dream about him, recently.

I received a letter, very formal, very charming. It was typed on graph paper, the paragraphs widely spaced and not indented. The letter said: "The weather out here is fine, the sky deep blue, not a cloud in sight. . . ." At the beginning of the letter, Pynchon said he had heard I wanted to know the answer to a riddle, and so he would put the answer at the end. I read on, but was arrested by one sentence. "The world," he said, "gives nothing." I could read no further, but sat down and wrote a reply.

"The world, my dear man, gives all there is."

□

It comes with the territory that merely setting out on The Quest will not bring The Answer, or much comfort. The world is too full, changing too fast. Molecules change, habits, addresses, our fingerprints spreading and blurring while we sleep.

But if you set out to find something, you will find *something*. That is certain. And there is a chance that what you find will be of value. A quiet lunch, a hot afternoon in a park to which you would not have gone to read the *Post* and watch the girls, a name, a street, a thousand streets falling toward the river in the rain like a long silver stairway to nowhere, the chance connections which tell you that the mess of insomnia and cocaine through which you walk is, miraculously, your own life.

It is possible to learn that the point at which the parallels converge is yourself, a point of reality running with perfect synchronicity with your life as it passes, with your own heartbeat's rhythm.

Perhaps Pynchon, in all his vast genius, is right. Perhaps all that is left of real value is a fear you cannot name. But standing where I stand, knowing what I know for certain, I don't think so. There are too many chances for the happy accident, and while happiness may be transient, so is sorrow. Both are equally weighted and equally possible.

And some night, when you think you cannot go on but know you will, it may occur to you that what awaits you is a rare joy, an individual ache that tells you that this sunset is unseen by others, this sea unsailed, this language inarticulate in the mouths of others.

I try to believe that. It comes and goes, but I try. Life is always sad, and sometimes the sadness has a name. The dream of Pynchon stopped. Dead, so to speak, and I went off to a summer in Europe where, for the first time in my life I drank too much.

□

Oh, the riddle. Page 168, *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Q: What did the cockney exclaim to the cowboy from San Antonio?

A: ●

Television/by Richard M. Levine

THE BIG SCHTICK

"Yock scribe?"
"Yep. You?"
"Yep. Yock scribe?"
"Yep. You?"
"Yep. Yock scribe?"
"Yep. You?"
"Yep. . ."

After so identifying themselves to each other the ten comedy writers who gathered on the studio lot one recent Monday morning stood around blinking in the shade. They could hardly believe their luck. Incredibly, they had gotten past the hard-bitten studio guard. And above them on the studio building was a hand-lettered sign: "20th Century-Fox Welcomes Comedy Workshop." After a collective lifetime of knocking on closed doors, they were about to receive, in the classic showbiz tradition, their Big Break. For these ten were the winners, out of some 4,000 entrants, of a nationwide contest for new comedy writers that had been conducted by the studio. Or, as the banner headline on the front page of *Daily Variety* put it last July: "Fox-TV Looking for Yock Scribes."

Now the winners desperately tried to hold down the balloon of their euphoria with self-mocking bravura.

"Somebody pinch me."

"I'm still waiting to hear from Warner Brothers."

"It's really a dream come true."

"I just sent Woody a telegram: 'Watch Out!'"

Shortly after ten o'clock Lynn Roth, 20th Century-Fox TV's director for comedy development, came out of the building to greet them. If there is, as some wildly exaggerated rumors hold, a new type of Hollywood mogul, she is it. Bright, attractive and—one searches for the exotic quality—*nice*! Lynn, at 29, is a veteran sitcom writer-turned-executive. The comedy workshop was her brainchild. After a year spent listening to ideas for pilots as mild and all-purpose as the detergents that paid for so many of them, she decided that there must be another way. Instead of seeking prior network approval for a pilot idea in order to pay a veteran writer the going rate of around $25,000 for a half-hour script, why not find new writers who hadn't sold any scripts yet and so weren't worn down by the system until all that was left in their retreaded brains was the baldest of ideas, the vestigial boss-comes-home-to-dinner-and-the-wife-burns-the-roast plot. It was a neat way around Hollywood's Catch-22: No network or studio will read a script that does not come through an agent; few agents will represent a writer who has not already sold a script to a network or studio.

Lynn sent out letters to university drama departments around the country asking applicants, who must neither have sold a script nor belong to the Writers Guild, to send in two samples of their work. A few scripts dribbled in. Then came the *Daily Variety* story and a wire service report. Thousands of scripts poured in, great hummocks of material that were read and evaluated on a point system. (The competition in Los Angeles was so fierce that when one of the winners, Richard David, took his scripts to his neighborhood post office, the fellow who stamped the envelope wished him luck but not too much, since *he* had just sent in a submission.) Most could be easily discarded. The office favorites here seem to be a soft-core teleplay about a woman raped by a six-foot strawberry she grew herself and a fat envelope marked "Please open quick! Great material!" Inside were swatches of cloth labeled "new material," "old material," "dirty material," etc. The accompanying applications were often more memorable than the scripts themselves. One was addressed from "Disneyland-by-the-sea, in other words the federal slammer on Terminal Island." A 78-year-old Ohio woman wrote in: "I just want one break before I die." A Texas cowboy sent in a photograph of himself in a poker game. "All my skits are original," he wrote on the application, "but the jokes are from here and there."

"If you're any good you won't be a writer for very long"

The ten winners, eight men and two women, had all quit their jobs and, in a few cases, moved to L.A. They would be paid $1,000 for the month-long workshop, at the end of which they would pair off into teams (for some reason no one writes TV comedy alone) and "pitch" pilot ideas to Lynn. If they were assigned a script to write they would become "term" writers that the studio could keep around by exercising a series of options in their contract. It was a chance for the kind of gilded servitude that had been standard practice in the heyday of the studio system but had long since become obsolete.

The poster facing the workshop members as they entered Lynn's office read: "Make Deals Not Love." "First you'll have to learn the vocabulary," she said. "In the next few weeks we'll pitch ideas, take meetings, have to have lunch some day, touch base from time to time and maybe even give good phone." The workshop members sat around in a circle and introduced themselves, comedy-writer style.

"Hi, I'm Alice Lunsford," said a pretty middle-age housewife who had given up an acting career 15 years earlier to raise a family. "I'm married and have two teenage kids."

"Hi," said Debra Frank, a 26-year-old comedy improvisation actress. "I'm not married and have four kids."

"Hi," said Albert Goodman, 28, who had just quit his job typing scripts at CBS. "I'm not married but I'm pregnant."

After the introductory meeting the group trouped in to see David Sontag, Lynn's boss, for a brief pep talk. (Sontag, dressed in the popular Rodeo Drive Roundup look (cowboy shirt and a three-strand bead necklace) said that being a term writer would be far different today than it was when Jack Warner ran his company like a Ford production line and "writers had to punch in at nine and wait for a messenger to come down the corridors on roller skates at five to collect their material." Since the top executives at Fox-TV started out as writers, he added, they didn't hold with Warner's luke-warm opinion of their colleagues as "schmucks with Underwoods." "This place is very informal and very crazy," Sontag concluded, "and we hope you'll contribute to the atmosphere."

After lunch at the best commissary in town (somebody once said that he knew the good old days in Hollywood were over when the "Please bus your own dishes" sign appeared in the Fox commissary), publicity stills were taken. Lynn handed out yellow T-shirts

The $10,000 Pyramid: Fox's future comedy writers pile it on

inscribed "Fox Yocks Scribes" and the group formed a wobbly pyramid outside the *M*A*S*H* set. Then, after a brief tour of the lot, they were shown the workshop headquarters, which were, as Lynn had warned, "not exactly the Istanbul Hilton." The cavernous mote-speckled room with appropriately padded walls had once been the control booth for the sound stage below, and during part of the workshop a silent orchestra could be seen busily scoring an equally silent movie (*Magic*) through a glass partition.

The group sat around a conference table in one corner of the room and opened envelopes that contained a writing pad and a contract. There was an audible gasp of pleasure when they read that they would be paid $4,234.50 for their pilot scripts and an audible sigh of disappointment when they realized that the money—Writers Guild minimum—was for each *team*.

Much of the following two weeks was spent getting to know one another in preparation for choosing writing partners. Once they got beyond their compulsive schticks, they were an interesting and varied group. Most of them had been holding down jobs on the fringes of the entertainment industry while waiting for their Big Break. Albert Goodman and Debra Frank had known one another when they were both guides on the Universal Studios tour, and when they met they immediately began motor-mouthing their-tour guide spiel in perfect sync. Since then Albert has tried unsuccessfully to sell his filmscript, *Come Again*—the story of a neurotic Jewish boy from Texas (Goodman is from Dallas) with a Christ complex who is crucified on the goalposts at Superbowl 15.

Like Goodman, Mark Masuoka had also written an unlikely film script, a "pornographic musical in three unnatural acts." Until the workshop he had been employed as a page at ABC (where he had once had his life threatened for refusing to admit a tourist to a taping of *Soap*), and it was there, he wrote on his application, that his luck changed. "On breaks one finds the best place to hide and catch up on necessary reading. It was in the third stall that I found an issue of the *Herald Examiner* with the article about your workshop."

Several of the finalists had left more established careers to participate in the workshop. Geoff Taylor, 28, and Ron Morgrove, 36, were both practicing attorneys. Morgrove, whose wife and two kids would soon join him from Portland, Oregon, had been trying to break into comedy writing for years, but until now his professional experience consisted largely of writing "rim shots" (one-liners that the drummer accentuates by hitting the rim of his drum) for Joan Rivers' Las Vegas act at $8 a joke. Scott Rubenstein was a high school English teacher in Sacramento; Paul Taylor was an editor on a small paper in Oxnard; and Steve MacCarthy worked at a San Diego TV station. At 38, Richard David had given up perhaps the most established career to pursue comedy writing. He had been a highly paid vice-president for business affairs at Metromedia Television. When he quit the job to try his hand at comedy writing, a colleague asked him if the rumor was true that he had only one year to live.

In the first week of the workshop, several successful, young comedy writers came to tell the group their penny loafer-to-Gucci stories and spoke candidly, and for the most part pessimistically, about the industry.

"Are you set for life?" Albert Goodman asked Ed Scharlach, the first guest speaker.

"Maybe a short one," said the 35-year-old Scharlach, who has been a co-producer of both *Happy Days* and *Chico and the Man* and now writes pilots.

"Do you have to compromise your best instincts in order to sell material?" asked Debra Frank.

"I'm an idealist," Scharlach said. "I start by trying to sell a show that I would want to stick with for seven years. But what you wind up selling is more hash than steak."

In response to a question about the network censors, Scharlach said it was sometimes difficult to anticipate their concerns even when you knew the rules. He mentioned a *Happy Days* script he had worked on in which Fonzie wanted to marry a virgin. "We spent a solid week thinking up a synonym for 'virgin,' knowing the word was taboo. Someone came up with 'untried' as a harmless, even poetic, alternative. When the script came back from the censor 'untried' was circled and the note read: 'This word is unacceptable. Substitute virgin.'"

Norman Steinberg, who co-wrote the pilot for CBS's new sitcom *In the Beginning*, was even more pessimistic about the state of the art. "I would advise you to do something commercial," he told the group. "The networks are not taking chances. *Three's Company* is not a chance. In the original British version the guy was gay, but ABC refused to do it that way. ABC is looking for what they call Unique Ideas, by which they mean *Mork and Mindy*, a show someone described as Mars in the fifties.

"If you're interested in pride of authorship, write a book. You will not be an author on television, I guarantee it. If you're any good, you won't even be a writer for very long because they'll

make you a producer. TV is the only medium that *rewards* its creative minds by telling them that they no longer have to do the only thing they do well."

If there was a flaw in the workshop it was that these cautionary words were hardly needed. People *came* into television cynical. Although the members of the comedy workshop were touchingly wide-eyed about their good fortunes, they were also interested in laughing all the way to the bank. It is not a medium in which one remains a virgin (or even untried) for long. Many of the writers had handed in very funny original scripts along with perfectly adequate versions of the standard made-to-wear formulas. At one point Lynn had to tell the group to "stop asking what will sell and think about what's new and different." At another, Lu Duffy, Lynn's assistant and the workshop coordinator, mentioned that one of the networks was looking for both a vehicle for Tony Randall and a new Chicano show."I got it,"Ron Morgrove said as others jotted down the inside tip. "Tony Randall opens a taco stand on La Cienega."

One day Lynn asked the group to come up with an idea for a series. Some of the initial suggestions, such as Albert's idea for a Jewish *Soul Train* called *Yid Vid* ("a lot of kids boppin' around in yarmulkes"), were not all that promising. The group discussed sitcoms centered on a fat farm (Lynn: "That comes in a lot") and in a supermarket, both of which had narrative problems they couldn't resolve.

"This place is very informal and very crazy, and we hope you'll contribute to the atmosphere"

"What about a help center that was staffed with a lawyer, a doctor and a psychologist," Ron Morgrove said.

"I did a story about a place like that on Fairfax," Paul Taylor, the journalist, said. "It was a free clinic right next door to a Jewish old-age home. Spaced-out hippies kept coming into the old people's cha-cha-cha contest by mistake."

"That's gorgeous," Lynn chuckled.

"Maybe we should make the head of the clinic a stuffy bureaucrat," Ron said. "The average clinic has 9.4 suicides a week and we're way below our quota with 4.1."

"We could make the receptionist a hypochondriac who was hanging around the clinic so much they decided to give her a job," Debra Frank said.

"It's a great opportunity to send up the professions," Albert said. "The doctor could be a compulsive cutter. He's out on parole to this work program."

"You got a pimple," Scott Rubenstein said, picking up the beat. "Let's do a biopsy."

"Or he could be a retired specialist always talking about his great operations."

"How he won the Golden Scalpel award ...."

"Or became a member of the one million stitch club . . ."

"The psychologist ought to play off the human potential movement."

"Everything's o. k. with him."

"Oh, you want to kill your mother. How?"

"He's our straight man."

"Nothing surprises him."

"One of his patients is always into the latest fad."

"Like strangle therapy . . ."

"People come in with Rolfing injuries."

"He's a nice understanding unflappable guy and gets into everyone else's trip."

"Hey, you guys, wait a minute," Mark Masuoka said, bringing the rapid-fire exchange to a temporary halt. "I think we're about to create *The Bob Newhart Show*."

Another day was spent watching and discussing cassettes of TV shows, from the ridiculous (an unaired all-women *M*A*S*H* called *The Nurses*) to the sublime (the first episode of *All in the Family*). For two days a group of actors gave impromptu readings of everyone's scripts—the first time most of the writers had gotten to hear their dialogue actually spoken. Then it was time to choose writing partners and come up with pilot ideas to pitch to Lynn.

Like every good sitcom this story has a happy ending. All the members of the workshop had their options picked up and they are now busily writing pilot scripts that range from the escapist fantasy to social comedy. Next season you may, or may not, see any of these shows on the air. The writers may, or may not, become rich and famous. The whole experiment may, but probably will not, make much of a difference in our cultural lives. It is more than possible that a few years from now these ten newcomers to television will be writing episodes for *Son of Mork and Mindy*, having cashed in their dreams of expressing themselves and changing the medium for a new BMW and a Malibu beach house. But maybe not. ●

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Movies/by Richard Corliss

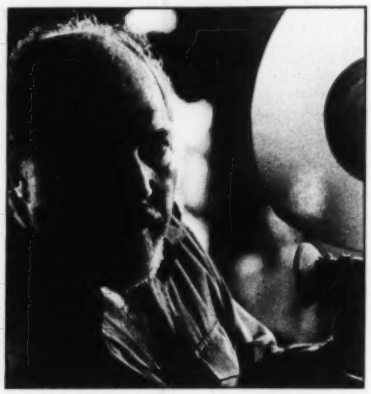
THIS ISN'T A WEDDING, IT'S A CIRCUS

According to one of his biographers, the young Robert Altman had a job "tattooing ID numbers on dogs' thighs." At 53, he's still at it. **A Wedding** displays a kennel of kooks, each tattooed with a personal eccentricity that's meant to help us tell a staghound from a golden retriever, a lurcher from a lap dog, a pointer from a pinscher, a coach dog in heat from a pure-bred bitch.

Nashville, the formal model for Altman's new film, surveyed 24 characters over a 3-day span, with the country music capital providing a combat zone for a culture war between the straights (the ma- and patriarchs of Hillbilly Brill) and the bents (hustlers and scufflers who'd pawn their glow-in-the-dark portrait of Hank Williams for the chance to sing backup on a gold record). Altman had shown, in early films like *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, *The Long Goodbye*, *Thieves Like Us* and *California Split*, that he was an acute and sympathetic observer of one choice American archetype: the grizzled romantic loser. So it came as no surprise when Altman, pitting these pathetic heroes against the Southern booboisie, made *Nashville* into an indictment of the middle class. They were bland, they were venal and (since Altman cast, mostly, off-key actors as C&W artists) they couldn't even sing.

Altman has been a believer in the tyranny of the "hip" at least since M*A*S*H. The cool, on-top-of-it Swampmen could humiliate poor, humorless Hot Lips, and we were still supposed to love them. To make this choice of style over sadism easier for us, Altman consistently consigned his middle-class characters to the worst fate a filmmaker could devise: status as cardboard villains. The dramatic shorthand demanded by *Nashville*'s format just made this bias more evident. As a result, we learned no more of the film's straight characters than we would from reading a headline on a paper across from us on a subway—or from staring at the expressionless face behind that paper.

Now, in *A Wedding*, Altman has doubled the number of *Nashville*'s roles to 48 (plus 8 kids and some musicians), telescoped the time span to 12 hours, and made almost all of the characters members of the upper middle class. Predictably, it's an even bigger mess than *Nashville*. And Altman's contempt for these people—mostly, the members of the groom's family (old-rich, Chicago) and the bride's (new-rich, Louisille)—is even more obvious and crippling, when the only hip guy in the movie is behind the camera. Altman takes what could have been an ideal subject—a silly-solemn ritual, one of the last functions in which the middle class can impose its style and values on flaky friends and rebellious children—and turns it into a vaudeville *La Ronde* full of stale jokes. He had a chance to scrupulously satirize the American bourgeoisie's constricted dignity, their repressed fury, their dogged attempt to live by the slogans that were their grandparents' ideals and their parents duties . . . and he whizzes over this fertile terrain like an Evelyn Wood reader flipping through a book of Wallace Stevens' poems.



Altman: Ringmaster of *A Wedding*

The tip-off comes early. The bride walks up the church aisle, her face pale, thin, gravely beautiful, illuminated by a closed-mouth smile. She approaches the altar to take her vows. Will you honor and cherish this man, until death do you part? "Ah will," she says, in an Appalachian twang, as she smiles, broadly now, revealing teeth wired in braces! (Laugh.) But why are we laughing? Is the joke on the bride, for ignoring all that silver (her own portable punch line)? Or is it on us, for expecting perfect teeth to complement her madonna face? Or is it on the actress, Amy Stryker, who really does wear braces? Doesn't she know that just about every Altman actress has a fetching overbite, and that dental discipline isn't necessary for her to become a star in the Altman cosmology? The joke may be all or none of these; it's certainly nothing more than a simple, sadistic twist on the blackened-tooth gag every kid learns in first grade. The laugh is too easy, too guilty.

The jokes in *A Wedding* never get much more sophisticated. A senile bishop gets angry and snorts, "Jesus Christ!" (laugh). A pretty photographer walks across a lawn and falls down (laugh). Two guilty lovers, spotting each other across an expanse of garden, run deliriously toward each other and — boom — bump bellies (laugh, goddammit!). Altman isn't the only radical entertainer who delights in, and means to comment on, music-hall humor; the *Beyond the Fringe* and *Monty Python* groups in England, and Charles Ludlum and Paul Morrissey in the U.S., have all used broad humor toward anarchist ends. But *A Wedding* doesn't have that much on its mind. Its form is chaotic but not subversive; its mood is mischievous but not outraged. It really seems to be about these people, this wedding. And if that's all it is—if it can't be inflated into a social metaphor, if it's not a come-dressed as-the-sick-soul-of-America party—then the movie's in big trouble, because scene by scene, character by character, this is thin gruel indeed.

At a two-hour running time, the film can allot only about two-and-a-half minutes to each member of the wedding; even paired off, they get just five minutes to themselves—that's shorter than your average TV comedy skit. And that's about what the movie is: a series of interlocking sitcom skits, whose tone is closer to the facile farce of *Soap* than to the audacious, tragicomic hysteria of the "Eunice" skits on the *Carol Burnett Show*. Most of *A Wedding's* skits are about sex. A quickie tryst seems, at the outset, an acceptable way to establish at least a character's recognition, if not his identity. But since (by my count) no fewer than 11 affairs are consummated, attempted or alluded to in the course of the film, the specific personalities ultimately blur into a time-exposure composite photo of passes, caresses and slaps—none of them with much erotic tension. In one

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sense, *A Wedding* is like a wedding to which we've been invited by mistake: We don't know anybody, but everybody else knows everybody. But by the end of *this* wedding, nothing has changed. You still can't tell the players without a Social Register.

Altman and his co-authors (John Considine, Patricia Resnick and Allan Nicholls, all of whom have parts in the film) determined that each character would have a secret, which would be revealed on the wedding day. So far, so good: The Lake Shore, Illinois, mansion where the movie takes place has enough mirrored closets to hide all that timid, well-heeled guilt. But except for the groom's mother (she's a morphine addict), father (he's an Italian prole who's in the U.S. under an assumed name and an oath of anonymity) and grandmother (she's dead), everybody's worried about sex! The bride's sister is a vapid, grinning nympho; the groom's aunt is having an affair with the black housekeeper; one of the ushers is gay; the wedding coordinator is a lesbian. All these millionaires, and nobody's fretting over tax or stock fraud, industrial pollution, managerial double-dealing or political bribery. Ralph Nader could sleep soundly if he knew that the only sin of the American ruling class was wanting to get laid.

Not much to worry about—or care about. Despite all the indiscretions and furtive glances, the earth around Lake Michigan is not trembling. So we need a cataclysm, a dramatic convulsion, a death or two—the standard escape hatch for even the most adventurous Hollywood filmmakers. In *Nashville*, it was an assassination; here it's a fatal car crash, involving (who else?) the only two healthy, happy, sexy young people in the movie. Tears and shock are called for. But at the end of *A Wedding*, as at the beginning, we have to ask what we're expected to react to. Are we shocked by the emotional gears Altman is manipulating? And what does the accident signify? The inevitable loss of the good young, while the bad guys survive? A nostalgic reference to the Vietnam experience? Again, it may be all or none of these; and again we can feel that sadistic tweak.

Altman has never had to reach this far for comic or melodramatic kickers. In his best work (the quartet of films mentioned above, and *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*), he created a visual-aural tapestry of such density, and characters with such breadth, that a succession of moments could be both comic and poignant. When *A Wedding* takes a break from handing out subpoenas, it allows us to discover those moments. Carol Burnett (made up to look like Donald Sutherland in *Fellini's Casanova*) pauses before a mirror, twists a lock of her hair to make herself the tiniest bit seductive, and through that gesture tells us she's ready to have an affair. Nina Van Pallandt (as the addicted mother) reminisces with her Italian husband about their first meeting, and muses, almost to herself: "You used to think I was so beautiful"—a thoughtful, beautiful moment. Lauren Hutton (producer of the wedding's official film) stands among the unmarried bridesmaids and, after the others play hot potato with the bride's bouquet, winds up with it; she stares at the camera, herself an ironic picture of a career woman from whom the bouquet is both only a prop and possibly a proposition. Geraldine Chaplin (the wedding coordinator) says goodbye to the bride, kissing her full on the mouth; the bride recoils; Chaplin explains and evades: "You're such a child. My brides are the only children I'll ever have." And Howard Duff is excellent as the family doctor and Van Pallandt's supplier; aging-handsome, randy, defeated, kind, wise.

But Altman doesn't seem to know what he has, or wants. For every quiet revelation there are 43 tired gags, and 17 wedding-train couplings. The savage moralizer wins out over the ironic humanist. Early in the film, Geraldine Chaplin scolds a servant: "This isn't a circus, it's a wedding!" Altman doesn't agree. He's chosen to be the Barnum of middle-American sideshows. The handsome animals jump through their hoops, ride on each others' backs, purr and roll over. And off to the side is the ringmaster with his ready smile, fast patter, and sleek, crackling whip.

Who'll Stop the Rain. Robert Stone's *Dog Soldiers* had a lot to say about the devastating effect of the Vietnam War on stateside morals and morale. Karel Reisz's movie strips away the novel's sociological scaffolding to concentrate on the mechanics of a cat-and-rat thriller (a dope-toting Viet vet on the run from a crooked fed). Men of action are natural movie heroes: They're so busy doing something, and doing it well—whether it's fixing a car, blowing up a mountain, or running drugs—we may not care that it's often not worth doing. As the man of action Nick Nolte offers conclusive proof that today's beefcake idols needn't be all swarth. Nolte's body is one big muscle convention (his face looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger's thigh), and he moves with the heavyweight grace of a puma on the prowl. He's got admirers of several sexes flocking to *Who'll Stop the Rain*, and he's reason enough to see this thin but wiry movie. ●

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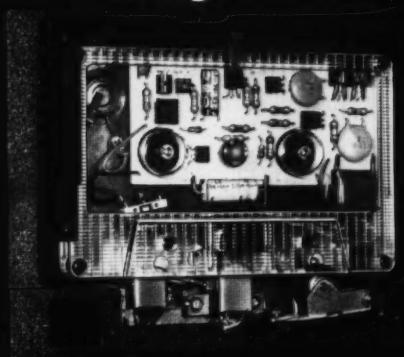

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Music/by Patrick Carr

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

The rain is coming down through the Long Island night and the American suburbscape rolls by the bus windows in a lonely blur. The feeling is strange but familiar, common to travel; it's both womb-like and lost, nostalgic and disassociated, and an opportunity for both euphoria and depression.

Tonight, depression wins. It's been a hard day stained by intrusions of mortality (the death of Keith Moon, an interview with the remaining members of Lynyrd Skynyrd), and this could be the rock and roll bus to nowhere. The Bee Gees are chirruping disco like brainless birdlets from the radio and a chorus of music business chatter (charts! action!) drowns out the tires, while dire thoughts arrange themselves around such issues as survival.

But there is an antidote. The bus *is* going somewhere—to a Bob Seger concert at the Nassau Coliseum—and furthermore, a Seger record comes on the bus radio. It's "Main Street," his classic salute to teenage thrills, adult loneliness and the need to go home, and it's like a signature on the mood, a nostalgia blanket. Seger seems to be looking out into the rain, too, making it a soundtrack, and that's a comfort, a way back in. Entertain us tonight, Bob: Take us out of this mush. Let's have some more of those simple truths, that ya-hoo beat.

Seger is the man for it, that's plain. He comes on stage, hair flapping, the perfect working-class hero for the teens of the day, and kicks it out immediately: "Ain't Got No Money" ("but I sure got a *whole* lot of love"). His moves are exact, a rock-rasp vocal precisely framed by a hammer band, the old true formula rubbed smooth over the years by sandpaper rockers like Stewart and Fogerty and Cocker and Springsteen.

And naturally it's an instant hit with the crowd, Long Island's 17-to-24's. They roar in unison when, during "Old Time Rock & Roll," Seger yells "Don't try to take me to a disco/You'll never even get me out on the flo' "—no Bee Gee fans, these. Seger goes on hitting them with his fine, tireless blend of rock and ballad, every self-written one a gem of form. He's mastered the hit riffs of the sixties, a distillate brew

of everything standard between Carole King and The Who. It's pedigreed product, this.

But though this is all working just fine, and though Seger is a master of evocation, it's really not that exciting. Sure, the crowd gets up and hops from one foot to the other and shouts for more, but their faces show no passion, very little in the way of excess, and practically no abandon at all. There are, however, a lot of nice smiles, and so finally it clicks: This is an event of good nature, calm fun, and familiarity; rock and roll as a pleasant night out, a celebration of coziness. When Seger bounds from stage to dressing room he wears a smile of pure, uncomplicated, straight-ahead happiness, nothing less or more.

Now, somehow this seems out of place (though maybe not out of time). The issues (and the beat) with which Seger has been dealing are the stuff of fever, as it was so delicately put in the fifties. That is, people rut, strut, and do *their* stuff to rock and roll. And rock and roll embodies weirdness and mania and risk, the whole business of getting carried away down inviting and maybe dangerous alleys. There are twists and turns to it, it bellies up and down; the best of it is as tense as it is beautiful. I cannot imagine Jimi Hendrix (or Moon, or Keith Richard, or Bob Marley, or Otis Redding) smiling Seger's particular smile. Where, in short, are the edges to this event? Are there any?

There are, it seems, almost none. When I talk to Seger after the show he confesses to being "a little high," then talks good-naturedly and happily about the unceasing joy of rock and roll work. He is one of America's hardest-working rock acts, putting in a good 50 percent of his time on the road (because he likes it), and he's in the prime of his life. He has a good band, money, instant studio access on his own terms, and a steady, "never really erratic" writing streak. At 33, after 15 years or so of hacking it in Detroit, he has it worked out: Rock and roll is his life; it's a good life, and it's a life hard won and valuable. "We have a saying in the Midwest, y'know," he says, "and it goes 'Everything In Moderation,' and it ain't that bad."

Back on the bus, I think about what happened today. It started up at MCA Records, where I interviewed the surviving Skynyrds. They showed me their (almost identical) arm wounds—how nice! Smashed flesh for breakfast! What's more, everyone around the place was feeling sick about Keith Moon, another MCA artist. Also, there were Buddy Holly posters all over the walls. "Jesus," someone said, "all these ghosts."

How to assimilate this? There are opportunities for pseudo-mysticism here—the death of heroes can always be made to mean more than it does—but let's ignore them. The Skynyrds and I all agree that firstly, rock and roll *is* risky because it *does* involve getting carried away, and it both attracts crazy people and makes people crazy. The second point is that it involves an awful lot of travel, which is dangerous on the impeccable grounds of statistical probability. The third point is pure showbiz, but nonetheless true: The brightest stars burn for the shortest time. And that's it. Or as Pete Townshend said of Keith Moon, he was "an artist in mayhem."

But we're getting carried away. Too many lethal drugs, too much vomit and twisted steel around here. Once again, there is an antidote.

Seger is part of it, but its other parts are all around us: Meat Loaf denying bizarre tendencies, claiming workaholism and calling out Warren Zevon for being drunk onstage; Chick Corea, a Scientologist, waxing lyrical about how you don't have to be a junkie to be in jazz anymore; Foreigner maintaining vehemently that they are *not* "hot blooded" but actually very civilized. The list goes on and on; the conclusion is that the music business, now a vast and decidedly modern institution, has developed a work ethic and a system in which the ability to deliver, as promised and on time, tends to be the deciding factor as to which "talents" are worthy of attention. Lunatics and artists in mayhem need not apply. Thus it is that the airwaves are full of the work of steady old hands and only the most reliable and committed "youngsters,"

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the people who really want to work. Which is certainly not as it used to be.

And naturally, the work itself shows little that is new. Conservatism reigns: Someone's always tugging at your heartstrings with a muted version of past glories (Ronstadt and her Crickets, Meat Loaf and his eternal teenage speed dream, Springsteen's odes to Phil Spector and the Ronettes, Foreigner's Bad Company fix). If you want something that delivers fire and ashes, heady stuff, you go to the young Limeys or the country people or the punks, all areas in which enormous amounts of corporate money are not yet at stake. And that's why the death of Keith Moon, a man still in the mainstream of big-time rock yet still possessed by demons still wayward, seemed to coincide so nastily with the state of rock affairs. He was a maniac, a fireball, in what has become a business-as-usual world; he was an archetype in an age of production models; he was an echo from the days when popular rock and roll was not in a state of compromise with its driving force. He was in all senses a man out of time.

But for now, the songs of Bob Seger, who writes beautifully on standard subjects and takes care of his muse and is sane and reliable and not likely to deliver something from left field, are the best new rock and roll you're likely to hear on the radio. Seger, who simply loves the sounds on which he was reared, is a man in the center of his time. ●

RECORDS by Jim Miller

There is something admirably nervy, I suppose, about any band that opens its 16th album with a confession and a dare: "I write the same old song/With a few new lines/And everybody wants to cheer it/I write the same old song/ . . . Admit you want to hear it." Peter Townshend, justly regarded as our best performing rock critic, has outdone himself on *Who Are You* (MCA), the first Who album in almost three years. This record takes up the dare his lyric on "The Same Old Song" throws down. Unfortunately, after hearing all the recycled riffs, I'm not ready to admit I really want to hear it—especially since I can choose from 15 other albums.

There comes a time when an artist no longer has a style; instead, the style has the artist. If the glory of popular music is the exploitation of a new sound, its curse is the subsequent popular identification of a performer with that sound. A style that once was a novel means of expression becomes instead an accustomed costume, encumbering any musical departures while enervating the motives for even trying.

The Who have made a very commercial album: lush hard rock, sweetened with synthesizers and strings. Small matter that the strings add nothing: Peter Townshend plies his trade with enough assurance to keep most cuts musically interesting. On "Trick of the Light," Townshend the guitarist proves he is still able to churn up a dust storm of notes, while Keith Moon's pummeling provides just the right percussive rumble. But apart from Townshend's acute self-consciousness and John Entwistle's witty perverseness (his "905" is a ditty about a test-tube humanoid), there is little happening here lyrically. And when the music stumbles or becomes bloated, the results are distressing; given the album's predictability, "The Music Must Change," a metaphoric anthem in the heroic musical mode of "Won't Get Fooled Again," sounds unintentionally bathetic.

The biggest disaster is Roger Daltrey. Never a great stylist, he has become insufferably mannered; he tries too hard, strikes too many poses, and the mix pitilessly keeps all of his tics before the listener. He sounds a little like an asphyxiated blowfish taking his last gasp.

With the sudden death of Keith Moon, *Who Are You* may well be this band's swan song. They were one of the greatest rock groups to come out of England in the '60s. Even if they had only recorded "My Generation" and *The Who Sell Out*, their reputation would be assured. And not only because of Peter Townshend's skills as a writer and guitarist.

Keith Moon was the quintessential rock drummer of the '60s. In his playing one heard the spirit of D.J. Fontana, the drummer in Elvis Presley's original band, and the first architect of rock percussion as aggressive anarchy (Fontana's drumming is what made "Hound Dog" great). On masterpieces like "My Generation" and "I Can See For Miles," Keith Moon brought that anarchy into the '60s. Long after the stiff pyrotechnics of Ginger Baker are forgotten, Keith Moon will be remembered for his unbridled percussive attack, and a life lived in the same key. ●

Books/by Geoffrey Wolff

NICE IS A VICE BUT SHAM IS DAMNED

Facts of Life
by Maureen Howard.
Little, Brown
(182 pp., $8.95).

In Maureen Howard's previous book and third novel, *Before My Time* (*NT*: January 24, 1975), a wife and her teenaged houseguest exchange autobiographies. The woman is shrewd and tough-headed: "Not to be sentimental, that's all I intend." I like that book a great deal, and this one even more. I'm not sure what to call it; *memoir* and *autobiography* are stiff words to suggest its fanciful ways with memory. *Facts of Life* releases the facts of Howard's life with a fine novel's timing and compression. Let's leave it that facts make the net across which this unsentimental story plays.

The bald facts are these: Maureen Howard was born in 1930 and raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where her father was Detective of Fairfield County. Like her mother she went to Smith, her brother to Yale. There was more money around than her parents would admit, but the Depression left marks. Her mother had been a teacher, and quoted shards of fine verse as she went about her household chores. Her father pretended to despise culture, and ate dinner wearing his undershirt. Howard and her brother, nominal Catholics as children, were educated by nuns. She was force-fed lessons in elocution and manners. She was married to an academic, and divorced from him.

The facts in her hands are turned this way and that, penetrated, translated into an unfailingly smart anatomy of American Catholic life, or rather—because *Facts of Life* has no pretensions to universal summary—of one Irish-American Catholic life. The manner is acidulous. Page 47, for example, employs the following descriptives: "bald techniques... cheap fiction... rickety studio set... endless hours of drivel... sterile games... triteness... vulgarity... spongy best-sellers... hokey television play... lowest blow...." Howard is sometimes elliptical and sometimes overwrought, but her only serious vice is a bitterness that seems now and then unearned. She knows herself: Early in *Facts of Life* she remarks that "my parents took my anger as a joke. Disgust swelled from me: I was not ready for compassion." Later, and characteristically, she introduces a story about her family saying "I must force myself to be fair."

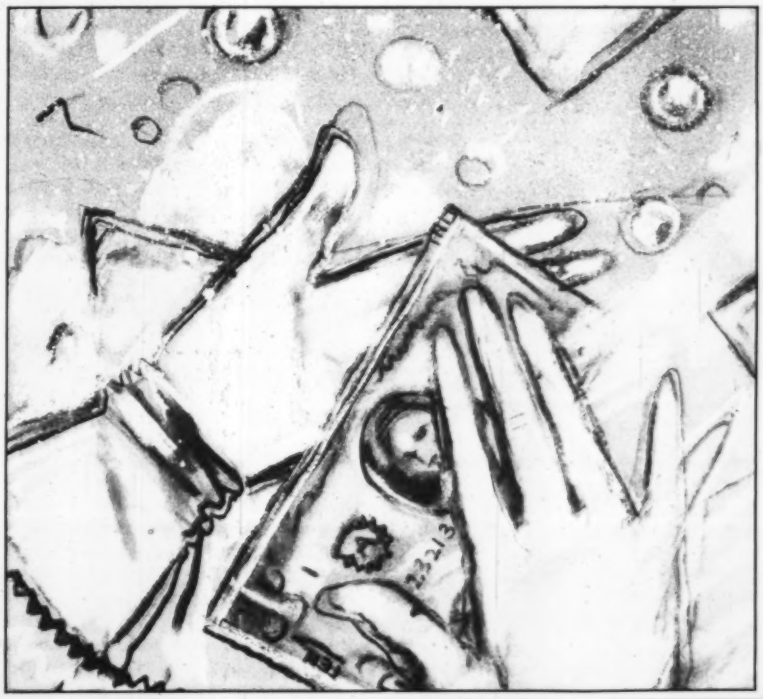
Her anger is of course her business, but she sometimes presumes to know you and me with excessive familiarity and contempt. The final section of her story is titled "Sex" (the previous two are "Culture" and "Money"), and she begins it with a direct address to *us*: "What good will it do if I tell you the truth? What purpose will it serve when you prefer distortions. Oh, you do—some nice story, or not so nice." I do not prefer distortions; do you?

But give Howard this: She never ingratiates. She mocks herself along with everyone else, and the *volte-face* that made her most proud was her eventual willingness to say *no* "to the first course, to the purse with matching shoes, real pearls, salad *after* with cheese—and to *The New Yorker* as bible. No, to keeping in my place...." She was raised by her mother, ("a misfit") to be nice, but she is not nice, "not the lady I was meant to be." Bless her.

Neither does she too highly prize nay-saying. She will not confess to sins she did not commit, a favorite tactic of the contemporary, outlaw memoirist. She has no more affection for self-conscious eccentricity than for self-conscious conventionality. Her affection is all for one thing, accuracy of sentiment. It is on behalf of such accuracy that she has perfected her voice, has taken such pains to modify her judgments. "My father was a terrible man," she begins, immediately adjusting the balance of her declaration: "I know I'll spend too much time in taking that statement back."

Whether she writes about culture, money or sex, pretense is her true subject, and a subject that demands the brutal ardor she brings to it. Mocking and bullyragging came easily to her father, fake proletarian that he was, and when he no longer bullied his daughter, and because of his putative illness she no longer bullied him, "it was sad for both of us. We shelved our feelings and along with them our passionate hold on each other. A loss of interest. We were nice."

Nice for Howard is untested. *Nice* is dead. *Nice* is her mother's "diseased attitude toward money," a compulsion to



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hide the fact that there was plenty in the family, a fixation that climaxed with Howard's discovery of her mother at the sink, washing tens and twenties: "But the money is so dirty." Her mother's father bought a big Bridgeport house from a family his mother had served as a maid; money then did things money no longer does. Howard's interest in it seems perplexed and curious rather than deeply felt.

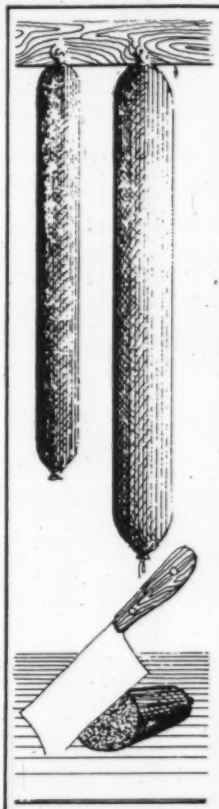
"Sex" is her most deeply felt subject, and she writes about it with delicacy and tact, the delicacy and tact of precision rather than manners. She manages to reflect both her fear of the subject and—running a stupendous risk—her eagerness to seduce her reader right here on the page: "So, I have created another evasion, but look when I take off my glasses and open the top three buttons on my blouse, wet my lips slightly with the tip of my tongue. I'm ready if you are."

Howard is a funny lady, and nowhere funnier than in her recollection of a Yale man who courted her at Smith: "In the case of Harrison Palmer III it was established by long-distance phone calls and urgent letters that we were in love. Florentine wallets and French perfume were exchanged." He was rich and a virgin. He thought of himself as a rebel with a sensual nature always at flash point. "I knew we had problems in the spring term when those fat letters arrived from New Haven and I resented the time it would take to read about the evils of a corrupt society that oppressed his free spirit, about my armpits like translucent petals and my pearly nates. He had an odd fix on the god Pan: I was still somewhat enchanted by this whimsical rich boy but now I doubted his goatish half."

Howard sees through all sham, and thus puts everything at the peril of her diminishing vision. Yet after she has stripped clean the paraphernalia of her "culture" and ours, after she has let the wet tens and twenties shrink on her mother's clothesline, after she has doubted everyone's goatish half, something small, hard and clean remains. It is a document, a love letter from her father to her mother, written when he was 49 and she was 53. It closes: "Give both the children a big hug and kiss for me and you my dear take XXXX and XXXXXX and XXXXX

Lovingly,
Bill"

Howard notes that there are ten more kisses on the letter. She knows that her father loved her mother, and that her mother loved him. She knows that their daughter was married, and is divorced. She knows enough not to make too much of these facts, but neither will she make too little of them. ●



The Meat Board has been feeding you a lot of baloney about nutrition

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The Railroad Brotherhood / by John Fleming

FINAL TRIBUTE

On my first trip East to college, I stayed up late one night, drinking with a salesman in the club car. In search of "intelligent conversation," I had come down from the dome car, where I'd been reading and daydreaming as the train cut through the Mississippi River valley.

The salesman was telling me tales of the astonishing women he'd met on trains when a huge porter in a white jacket walked past—a Sonny Liston-type, with a shaved head. "Tip well and always tip the porter as you board the train," the salesman said with a wink. "Anything you want, he'll get."

The advice sounded worldly and romantic to me, as did the salesman's story about how some porters on Canadian Pacific trains made a nice living smuggling whisky into the U.S. during Prohibition. I liked the idea, and for the rest of my youth felt a certain respect for Pullman porters—although not for the right reason. The right reason, I would later learn, was that against terrific odds they had formed a union, and made it one of the country's most important black political institutions.

That union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, died a few months ago. The death came as no surprise; when the Brotherhood vanished, by way of a merger with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), its membership, once as high as 15,000, had dropped with the decline of railroad travel to 1,000.

The Brotherhood was formed in 1925, when the United States was in the middle of a golden age of railroads. It was the heyday of mighty, cross-country trains like the *Empire Builder*, which pulled out of Chicago every morning bound for the Northern plains, the Rockies and the remote promise of the West Coast. These trains were "hotels on wheels," equipped with lavish sleepers and coaches manufactured and operated by the Pullman Company.

The Pullman porter was part of the legend of the railroads. "This army of porters," said a company brochure from the early 1920's, was made up of "a higher grade of Negro"—one who was happy punching pillows, shining shoes and carrying the white man's baggage. Their famous obedience was sometimes awesome: One night I watched as a woman complained to an old porter about a fly in her compartment. The porter asked the woman—wearing pajamas and holding her purse, her hair up in curlers—to step into the sleeping car's narrow hallway. Quickly he shooed the fly away. "Anymore flies, ma'am," he said with the perfect touch of deft neutrality, "just ring."

Despite this humble tradition, by 1925 many of the porters were dissatisfied with their working conditions and public image. In those days porters worked a 400-hour month—often catching just a few hours of sleep at night on a dining-car table—to make $67.50. With these substandard wages, porters were forced to hustle tips to make ends meet. And out of his salary and tips, a porter paid for his own meals and his own uniforms and equipment—including the polish used to clean passengers' shoes.

At first, when a group of porters asked A. Philip Randolph, then a radical Harlem journalist and street-corner orator, to help them in an organizing effort, he was reluctant to take on a company like Pullman. The company was rich, and there were no laws that clearly gave railroad workers, let alone black men, the right to organize. But Randolph couldn't resist the challenge, and for the next 12 years he crisscrossed the country recruiting porters for the union. At the same time, Randolph was battling for support from the American Federation of Labor—then a bastion of bigotry—and the federal government. In 1936, the AFL finally granted Randolph's union its international charter. And in 1937, after the passage of some pro-union New Deal legislation, Pullman signed an agreement with the Brotherhood that reduced the porters' work month by almost half and nearly doubled their wages. It was the first contract ever negotiated between a national corporation and a black union.

With the weight of the newly formed Brotherhood behind him, Randolph became an early lobbyist for the Civil Rights movement. In 1941, he got President Roosevelt to force federal war contractors to begin hiring blacks; seven years later, he was largely responsible for President Truman's order desegregating the armed forces.

Randolph went on to become the country's leading black figure in the 1940's and 1950's. But the times changed, and the luster of his middle-of-the-road, integrationist reputation faded with the rise of black nationalism. Today, Randolph, now close to 90, is virtually forgotten.

There was more than a little irony in the recent meeting celebrating the merger of the Brotherhood with the clerks' union, which is primarily made up of stewardesses and airport workers. It was held in BRAC's office tower in one of the Chicago suburbs that circle O'Hare Airport. About 25 delegates from Brotherhood locals across the country—most of them black men in their 60's and 70's—showed up to hear a few speeches, take a look at BRAC's computers and have lunch at a nearby Holiday Inn.

Afterwards, they clustered together in the motel's pastel-colored lobby, exchanging yarns about crack trains and complaining about Amtrak. Bundled in their overcoats, these were plainly men whose time had passed. But railroad men are loyal: they took cabs downtown to Union Station and rode the trains back home. ●

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